



■ LIFESTYLE/DI

Prom
dos and
don'ts

■ WORLD/A10

Lethal bird flu
virus spreads
to Africa



■ BUSINESS/B1

Coco-based
exports jumped
14.6% in 2005

■ WORLD/A10

VP Cheney
lacked hunting
license



GI in hot water for shooting stray animals at Sulu camp

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

PERHAPS THIS AMERICAN SOLDIER LIKES LIVE subjects for target practice.

Lt. Mike Rice, a member of the US Navy Seal Team 1 taking part in the RP-US Balikatan military exercises in Sulu, has gotten into the habit of

GI IN HOT / A70

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

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BALANCED NEWS FEARLESS VIEWS

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★ ★

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SC okays filing of charges against Marcopper officials

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SUPREME COURT HAS GIVEN THE GREEN light for the indictment of officials of Marcopper Mining Corp. for allegedly causing environmental damage in Marinduque a decade ago.

In a 17-page decision released yesterday, the high court turned down the petition by Marcopper officers John Eric Loney, Steven Paul Reid and Pedro Hernandez seeking to quash the com-

SC OKAYS / A8



ROSES FROM SPECIAL KIDS

President Macapagal-Arroyo gets red roses from hearing-impaired students of the Philippine Institute for the Deaf in Pasay City. The President visited the school on Valentine's Day.

EDWIN MACASMAS



FROM THE INSIDE looking out. Peering through the gate of his Tanay resthouse, former President Joseph Estrada watches actress Susan Rocas and former Vice President Teofisto Guingona plant seedlings to launch his Freedom from Hunger movement.

Gov't raises La Niña alert

All agencies ordered to prepare for heavy rains during summer

By Blanche S. Rivera

LA NIÑA, A WEATHER phenomenon characterized by heavy rains, is coming.

Malacañang has ordered all government agencies to prepare for the onslaught of heavy rains during the summer months as the weather bureau noted consistent indications of a La Niña in the country.

President Macapagal-Arroyo met with Cabinet officials in Malacañang on Saturday for a briefing with the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) on recent weather disturbances that killed 14 people and displaced at least 5,700 families.

Increases in the incidence of typhoons, floods and frequent heavy rains since November last year may be explained by the development of La Niña, Pagasa said.

"The persistence of present oceanic and atmospheric patterns in the next two months will confirm the occurrence of a La Niña episode and continue to influence the climate of the Philippines," Pagasa chief Graciano Yumul said at a press briefing yesterday.

"Conditions in the country will be characterized by normal to above normal rainfall at least up to May, the probability of more tropical cyclones within the PAR (Philippine Area of Responsibility) and flooding in some areas," he said.

GOV'T RAISES / A20



MORE THAN 4,000 people head for safety after nonstop rains spawned floods and mudslides on Panacan Island, Leyte. With total damage to crops and property that could reach P100 million, the government has placed the province under a state of calamity. (See story on Page A18.)

JANE ARRAZ

Ombudsman faces contempt over P1.3-B Comelec mess

By Armand N. Nocum, Jerome Aning and Philip C. Tubeza

NEWLY APPOINTED OMBUDSMAN Mercedes Gutierrez faces contempt charges for the failure of her office to determine the criminal liability of Benjamin Abalos, chair of the Commission on Elections, and other poll officials linked to irregularities in the P1.3-billion automated counting machine deal.

The Supreme Court yesterday ordered the Ombudsman to explain why it should not be held in contempt of court for not complying with its directive to determine the criminal liability of officials involved in the voided contract between the Comelec and Mega-Pacific Corp.

The court was referring to its

OMBUDSMAN / A8

GMA hits 'Wowowee' organizers; ABS-CBN miffed

By Christine O. Avendaño and Leila B. Salaverria

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday took to task the "organization" behind the daily game show that triggered the

Feb. 4 stampede, but did not name ABS-CBN.

Speaking for the first time about the stampede outside the PhilSports Arena (formerly Ultra) in Pasig City, the President said the "tragedy" showed "the inade-

quacy and negligence of the organization that sponsored" the game show "Wowowee."

"At nakakalungkot na sa halip na tukuyin ang kalinga sa mga biktima at akuin ang responsibilidad, iyong mga sponsor ng pal-

abas ay hinahanap na pagbintangan iyong mga biktima dahil mahirap sila (And the sad thing is, instead of focusing on providing care for the victims and claiming responsibility, the show's sponsors are trying to pin the

blame on the victims because they are poor)," she said in an interview over dzRH radio.

In a statement issued later in the day, ABS-CBN said: "We are saddened that President Arroyo

GMA HITS / A6

OFW blew lid off secret 'shabu' flea market

By Ramon Tulfo

IF THE PEOPLE AT THE MAPAYAPA compound hadn't beaten up one of their customers, the "shabu flea market" in the heart of Pasig City might still be doing brisk business today.

The customer was an overseas Filipino worker on a long vacation from the Middle East.

Few people know that in the planning of Friday's police raid on the drugs enclave, a suggestion came up that helicopter troops be dropped onto the compound for the assault, but this was rejected because such a

strike could provoke bloody fighting, according to information obtained by the INQUIRER.

Every day, hundreds of "scorers" or "shabu" users entered the place, which operated 24 hours. It was a compound that never slept.

The mauling incident was reported by the OFW to a media colleague, Erwin Tulfo, my brother. At the time, Erwin was still hosting for ABS-CBN the "Mission X" program dealing with exposés on the ugly side of life. The show has since moved to another channel.

By the OFW's account, he had

OFW / A20



'Love' fills the halls of Congress

By Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora

LOVE, ACTUALLY, FILLED THE HALLS OF Congress on Valentine's Day. Some lawmakers yesterday spread their

heart-filled messages by text, while others gave out cookies and chocolates.

When Deputy Speaker Emilio Espinosa Jr. ordered a roll call, only 110 House members (out of 236) responded. It would seem that

LOVE / A6

Blasted hopes, broken dreams for 14 minors

By Dona Pazzibugan and Edson Tandoc Jr.

ONE IS A 17-YEAR-OLD GIRL WHO is eight months pregnant. Another is aged 14 with a 4-month-old fetus growing inside her.

Both have tested positive for drugs and they were among 14 mi-

nor who will be charged with illegal drug use after they were rounded up with 300 other people during a police raid on a compound of "shabu restaurants" in Pasig City, officials said yesterday.

Theirs are the tales of blasted hopes and broken dreams, social workers said.

"They knew that using drugs is wrong. But something inside them had also gone wrong," city social welfare head Francisca Delleva told the INQUIRER.

Delleva said most of the children who tested positive for drugs came from broken families. Officials said the 14 minors,

aged 14 to 17, would be charged along with around 200 adults who were arrested in Friday's raid which showed how widespread the menace of a P214-billion illegal drugs industry had become.

"Charges will be filed against

BLASTED / A20



WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of the country will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY NAME ALARCON, FOR RESEARCH (02/15/06)

Second FRONT PAGE

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Metro Manila Partly Cloudy	Baguio Partly Cloudy	Ula/Ra/Beacod Cloudy with Rains
Baguio Partly Cloudy	Taguig Partly Cloudy	Boxos Cloudy with Rains
Taguig Partly Cloudy	Lasag Partly Cloudy	Cebu Cloudy with Rains
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Tagaytay Partly Cloudy	Palawan Partly Cloudy	Ben. Santos Cloudy with Rains
Legaspi Partly Cloudy	Palawan Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga Cloudy with Rains
Cebu Partly Cloudy		Cagayan de Oro Cloudy with Rains
		Bohol Cloudy with Rains

Senate told: Cha-cha or bust

By Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA YESTERDAY WARNED SENATORS opposed to Charter change that they risked becoming "irrelevant" if they failed to support the shift to a parliamentary system.

"We don't wish to say that they will become irrelevant but that's what's going to happen," the Speaker said in a press briefing.

"It's our hope that statesmanship will prevail in the Senate ... and will respond to the call of our people to effect changes in the Constitution to save our country from this impossible system of constant chaos, paralysis and gridlock," said De Venecia.

The House has decided to push through with Charter change, even without the participation of the Senate.

De Venecia said the initiative to gather 195 signatures of "all members of Congress," voting jointly, to constitute the Senate and the House into a constituent assembly to authorize Charter change could be finished

in 30 days.

He said the constitutional provision authorizing the revision of the Constitution by a three-fourths vote of all members of Congress was "very clear, there's no room for ambiguity."

The Senate insists that only a majority of both chambers, voting separately, could convert Congress into a constituent assembly to amend the Charter.

The Senate also wants the amendments to be done by way of a constitutional convention, which De Venecia thinks would be too long and too expensive.

"We're not trying to abolish the Senate here. Both will be replaced ... by a unicameral parliament," De Venecia said.

He expects a challenge to be

brought before the Supreme Court but said he believes "in the judicial statesmanship of the Supreme Court" to stand by the House interpretation.

He said a "two-track initiative" for Charter change would be set into motion in the "next 48 hours," starting with the signature campaign in the House and a people's initiative to be launched by 100 people's and non-government organizations at the Ninoy Aquino stadium today.

Rep. Constantino Jaraula said the House committee on constitutional amendments, which he chairs, has already completed the debates on specific amendments.

Once the 195 signatures are gathered, the new Charter will be presented for adoption by the plenary and a joint session could be convened by March 15.

Senators, including allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo, scoffed at the 30-day ultimatum.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the Senate would not be rushed into completing its hearings on what mode to adopt.

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago said what De Venecia was doing was unconstitutional which he would have to answer for before the SC.

"We reject this brazen attempt to ram Cha-cha down our throats. I predict that this ultimatum will convince a total of zero senators," said Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan.

"No need to wait for 30 days. He can have my answer now. No to concentration of power. No to kamikami, trayo-tayo [cronyist] politics. No to Cha-cha," said Sen. Manuel Roxas.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said the House has to set its priorities right by transmitting the 2006 budget measure to the Senate before tackling Charter change.

AFP warns would-be rebs as Magdalo boys go to court

By Tarra V. Quismundo and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE MILITARY WARNED YESTERDAY IT would court-martial soldiers who heeded escaped mutineers' call for them to wear red armbands as a sign of protest, and fielded up to 400 troops to prevent any more escapes as 21 detained Oakwood mutineers appeared before a Makati court trying them on coup d'etat charges.

Armed Forces spokesman Col. Tristan Kison issued the warning even as the military top brass has insisted that the troops were solidly behind their embattled commander-in-chief.

Apart from not being part of a soldier's uniform, wearing red arm bands even when they're in civilian clothes would constitute "violation of good order and military discipline because it's a sign of defiance," Col. Tristan Kison told reporters.

The so-called "Magdalo" group which tagged the July 27, 2003 mutiny at the Oakwood Premier hotel in Makati has been vocal lately about their goal to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Four Magdalo officers who escaped from an Army detention facility last Jan. 17 issued statement on Monday urging the public to dramatize their protest against what they called the "bogus" Arroyo administration by wearing red arm bands.

Meanwhile, in spite of the unusually heavy security thrown around them, one of the 23 accused soldiers who appeared in court yesterday managed to speak with reporters for some five minutes before he was called away by a court employee to sign an attendance sheet.

"Our group is calling on the people to hoose, decide, whether we would stay under his system run through corruption and deception, or will we take the stand for truth and change?" said 1st Lt. Francisco Ashley Acedillo.

About 30 uniformed Military Police troopers were inside the court room guarding the 21 accused officers. In addition,

about six military agents in civilian clothes guarded Marine Capt. Nicanor Faelon, who had escaped last Dec. 14 but was recaptured on Jan. 27. Also in court apart from the 21 were two other officers earlier released on bail.

Army Capt. Ramon Zagala II, spokesman for the military's National Capital Region Command said roughly 400 soldiers provided security for yesterday's hearing at Branch 148 of the Makati Regional Trial Court.

Taking their posts as early as sunrise, soldiers were detailed to guard the route of the convoy of roughly 30 military vehicles that escorted the accused to court, the perimeter and surrounding intersections of the old Makati City Hall building, as well as hallway and interior of the Session Hall.

"It's like there's a war here," said lead defense counsel Roel Pulido. "I think this is an indication of how insecure they really are. Two weeks ago they were saying four escapees cannot launch anything, but now they're saying 25 detainees are a threat to national security."

Acedillo appeared undaunted, however, as he approached the reporters. No one made an effort to stop him either.

"Obviously, our detention does not limit our goal," he said. "Physically, you are limited, but that is not the end of one man's aspirations. His thought and awareness extends and expands beyond the jail cell."

Just before the hearing started, he slipped reporters a note in the name of three Magdalo leaders who decided not to attend the hearing - Navy Lieutenants Antonio Trillanes IV and James Layug, and Marine Capt. Gary Alejano. It was the same statement Trillanes issued after a hearing on Jan. 17.

After Judge Oscar Pimentel adjourned the hearing, one of the soldiers handed reporters a white handkerchief bearing the Magdalo insignia printed in red. Written under the insignia in bold black letters were the words: "Sulong Bayan! Ituloy ang Laban (Advance People! Continue the Struggle!)."

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Proj (D1) MCR journal 9 0300 Secret of 2006

THE PASIG PROPERTY USED AS a "shabu tiangge" should be seized and converted into a detention and drug rehabilitation center.

III hurled this challenge at the Department of Justice, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and the Philippine National Police to deliver a clear and strong message that the govern-

This, Soto said, fulfills the requirement that one of the pillars in drug abuse prevention is reha-

The former senator, in a press statement, cited R.A. 9165, the

The Pasig police chief and six members of the PDEA were relieved in the wake of last week's raid on what was described as a "one-stop shabu restaurant" in Pasig.

A WEEK BEFORE THE nation commemorates the 20th year anniversary of the first people power uprising, President Macapagal-Arroyo said "the face of Edsa has changed as far as leaders are concerned." She plans to celebrate it quietly.

"Because the people are tired of politics," Ms Arroyo explained, in an interview over dzRH radio.

The President said that it was better to celebrate the Feb. 22-25 people power uprising with a simple ceremony.

"And each of us can celebrate individually and with meaning," President Arroyo said.

"As for me, I will bring the government to the people on this day as I have been doing everyday," she also said.

At the height of the political crisis that President Arroyo faced last year, various sectors and the Palace have claimed that people were losing faith in launching another people power uprising. *Christine O.*

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$$\|1 + w_k\|_1 \leq C + 2^{k/2} \|w_k\|_2$$

By Norman Bordador

Andaya made the statement as he formally presented to the entire House membership the long-delayed proposed national budget for 2006. His sponsorship speech was also his valedictory address to Congress as he prepared to assume his new position in President Macapagal-Arroyo's Cabinet as budget secretary.

"This budget groans under the weight of loan repayments, our collective penance for engaging in the national sport that is tax evasion," Andava said.

Militant and cause-oriented groups have repeatedly blamed the massive debt-servicing outlays for the dwindling funds left for education, health and other services. Party-list groups in the House have even filed a bill calling for a halt to repayment of loans to build the \$2.1-billion Bataan Nuclear Power Plant mothballed nearly 20 years ago.

"Debt service is the elephant in the living room, one cannot deny its existence or shove it under the rug," the representative from Camarines Sur said.

"We can either pay it down now or bequeath it all later to our children," he added. "We shouldn't allow them to visit our graves and rant: All you have left us are IOU's."

"What we can do is to stop the debt pile and let revenues, not loans, pick the tab for government spending. We have maxed out (overextended) our national credit card," Andaya said. "If we want our credit repayments

National debt

The Philippines' national debt stood at P3.91 trillion as of November 2005.

The proposed P1.053-trillion 2006 budget is 14.7 percent or P134.6-billion higher than the 2005 budget of P918.6-billion.

In terms of expense class, P330.5 billion or 31.4 percent goes to personal services and P616.7 billion or 58.6 percent goes to maintenance and other operating expenses, leaving only P106 billion or 10 percent for capital expenditures.

Of the entire allotment for maintenance and operating expenses, P340-billion, which represents 32.3 percent of the total budget, will go to debt servicing, while P166.5-billion or 15.8 of the budget, will go to local government units.

In line with Constitutional provisions, the Department of Education is to get the single largest allocation with P119.1 billion. Other allocations include: Department of Public Works and Highways (P62.3-billion); National Defense (P51.6-billion); Interior and Local Governments (45.6-billion); Agriculture (15.6-billion); Agrarian Reform (P15-billion); Transportation and Communication (P14.3-billion); Health (P10.6-billion); Judiciary (P8.5-billion); and Finance (P6.9-billion).

Andaya is to be replaced as head of the House appropriations committee by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda.

"I hope that you will treat me kindly in my new work, but friendships, I understand, should not come in the way of your duty to check and balance the department I will lead," Andaya said.

Speaker Jose de Venecia lauded Andaya's "energy, creativity and competence" as chair of the appropriations panel. "Andaya is surely a great loss to the House but a big gain for the nation."

By Michael Lim Ubac

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS yesterday said they expected Moody's Investors Service to revise upwards its outlook on the Philippines, following Fitch Ratings' and Standard & Poor's "stable" assessment of the country's economic prospects.

Rep. Jesli Lapus, chair of the House ways and means committee, said the positive rating from Fitch and S&P was something the government had hoped for for a long time.

"In fact this is a delayed reaction by theoretical ratings agencies. They cannot ignore the real score in the market place. Even the country's corporate and banking bond floatations never had it so hot," he said.

Lapus predicted that Moody's, which last week decided to retain its "negative" outlook on the Philippines despite recent economic reforms, would also reverse its view.

"We will surely get a positive rating from Moody's once we prove our efficiency in implementing the reformed VAT and other reform measures," said Lapus whose committee steered the passage of the expanded value-added tax measure.

Rep. Ezequiel Javier, the committee vice chair, said an upgrade from two out of three interna-

tional credit-rating agencies was proof that the country was "fast regaining the respect of the international community."

"This is a recognition of government's seriousness and decisiveness in pursuing needed reforms to correct structural defects in the tax system, generate more revenues through tax measures and generate earnings or savings from administrative measures," said Javier.

At the House meanwhile, the father of Finance Secretary Margarito Teves late Monday abandoned his bid for the chairmanship of the ways and means committee, forestalling what would have been a father-son monopoly of the country's taxation and finance powers.

In a privilege speech, Rep. Herminio Teves, a ruling Lakas party representative from Negros Oriental, said he was conceding the chairmanship to Lapus, the current committee chair, despite a midterm-sharing agreement forced in 2004.

But the older Taves wanted it put on record that he did not agree with the reasoning of the House leaders in denying him the committee post, that is, that a father-son, legislative-executive monopoly of taxation and finance powers would not be in the country's interest.

A MAKATI COURT YESTERDAY agreed to extend the medical furlough of jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari and his fellow accused, who are both confined at the St. Luke's Medical Center.

Judge Spino Marella Jr. granted Misuari and his spiritual adviser Ustadz Abuharis Usman an 8-day extension of their temporary freedom, which would have ended yesterday.

"The court finds the urgent motion to be with merit considering the age of both accused, the nature of their illness, and proof submitted in support thereof," said Marella in an order released yesterday morning.

Misuari, 65, a former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and Usman, 68, have been detained for the past four years in a special Philippine National Police detention facility in Fort Sto. Domingo, Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

They were charged with rebellion for their role in the bloody uprising that killed some 100 people in Jolo in 2001.

Misuari and Usman were released under tight guard on Jan.

28 so they could undergo a thorough medical examination at St. Luke's in Quezon City.

Lawyer Arthur Lim cited in his petition for an extension that tests revealed medical conditions that needed immediate treatment.

Usman, he said, was diagnosed with "symptomatic gallstone disease," an ailment that needed surgery, according to a medical certificate from St. Luke's. The operation meant that he would need to be confined until Feb. 22.

Misuari proved to have erratic blood pressure readings. His medical certificate recommended "monitoring of blood pressure with medications."

While Misuari did not need extended confinement, Lim said "it would be more practical and convenient" for the two accused to be returned to their detention facility at the same time.

Copies of Marella's order were given the Department of Interior and Local Government, PNP chief Director General Arturo Lomibao, and the PNP's health service office. **Tarra V. Quismundo**

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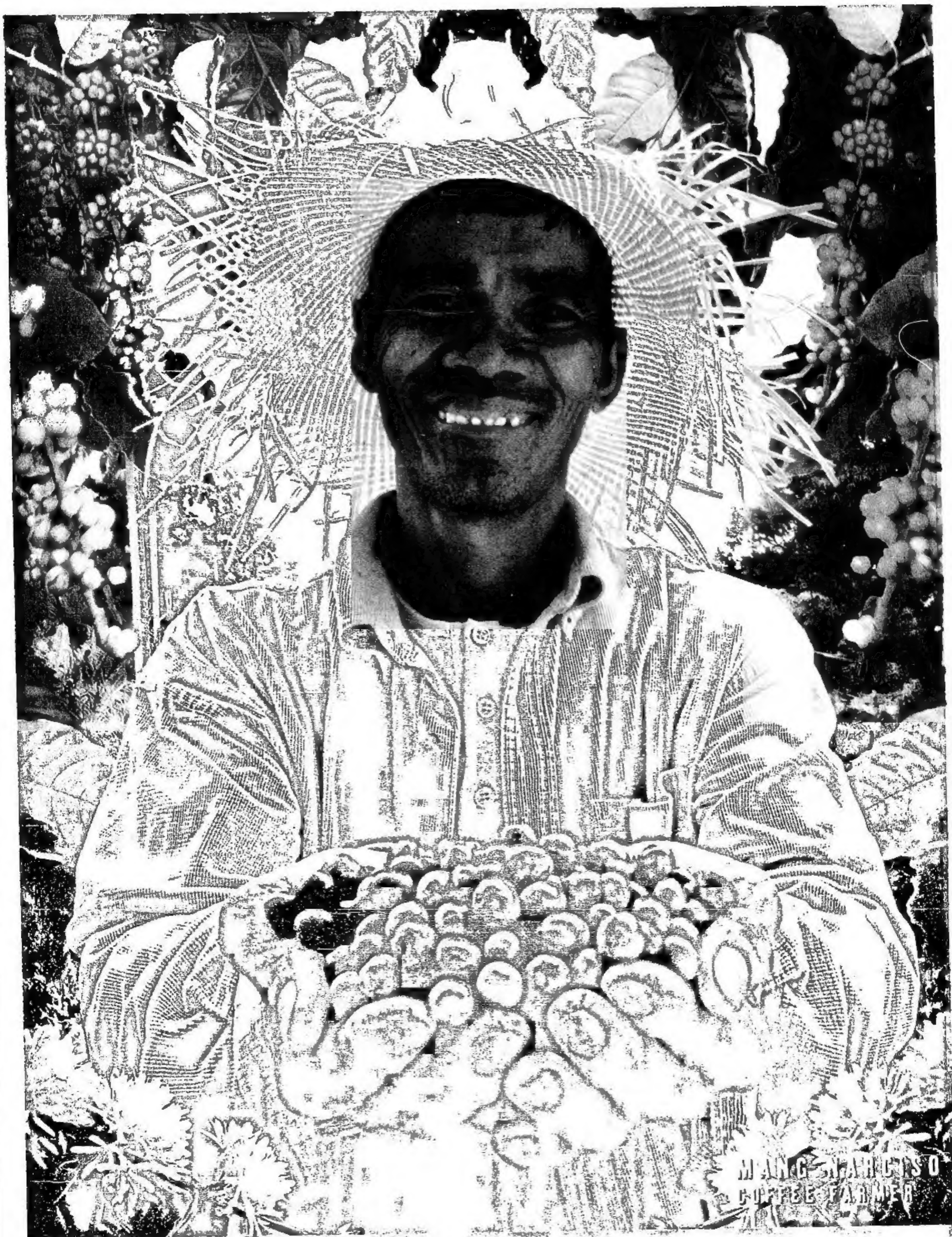
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GMA hits 'Wowowee' organizers; ABS-CBN miffed



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PIBD0707A209	27-Jan-07	14.50%	7.90%	PIBD0607G456	25-Jul-07	10.75%	7.86%	PIBD0408D094	1-Apr-08	11.375%	8.29%
PIBD0407A037	30-Jan-07	10.50%	7.57%	PIBD0707H275	3-Aug-07	14.25%	7.80%	PIBD0508E494	5-May-08	11.625%	8.32%
PIBD1007A025	30-Jan-07	14.125%	7.57%	PIBD0407H058	14-Aug-07	10.00%	7.50%	PIBD1008E055	26-May-08	11.625%	8.38%
PIBD0207B817	10-Feb-07	8.875%	7.59%	PIBD0707H286	24-Aug-07	14.25%	7.91%	PIBD0308F121	2-Jun-08	9.75%	8.38%
PIBD0707B217	24-Feb-07	14.25%	7.81%	PIBD0707H292	21-Sep-07	14.60%	7.97%	PIBD0508F021	1-Jul-08	10.375%	8.39%
PIBD0507B435	11-Mar-07	13.00%	7.62%	PIBD0507H464	24-Oct-07	11.00%	8.03%	PIBD0508G588	24-Jul-08	11.625%	8.39%
PIBD0307C099	11-Mar-07	11.00%	7.84%	PIBD0407H083	13-Nov-07	10.125%	7.88%	PIBD0408G118	29-Jul-08	11.625%	8.39%
PIBD0707C225	23-Mar-07	14.00%	7.99%	PIBD0307K109	16-Nov-07	11.375%	8.09%	PIBD0408H127	25-Aug-08	11.75%	8.41%
PIBD0507D442	11-Apr-07	13.00%	7.89%	PIBD1007K042	27-Nov-07	22.675%	8.09%	PIBD1008H062	27-Aug-08	11.625%	8.41%
PIBD0707D233	18-Apr-07	13.375%	7.70%	PIBD1007K112	27-Nov-07	21.125%	8.13%	PIBD0508J519	2-Oct-08	10.25%	8.43%
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PIBD0407E042	22-May-07	10.625%	7.76%	PIBD0408A072	8-Jan-08	10.75%	8.17%	PIBD0708K322	15-Nov-08	15.625%	8.49%
PIBD1007E030	29-May-07	13.875%	7.77%	PIBD0508A470	23-Jan-08	10.75%	8.17%	PIBD1008K077	26-Nov-08	18.00%	8.49%
PIBD0707F259	15-Jun-07	13.50%	7.80%	PIBD0708B313	8-Feb-08	16.00%	8.28%	PIBD1008K129	26-Nov-08	17.00%	8.49%
PIBD0507F013	27-Jun-07	12.375%	7.82%	PIBD0408B006	19-Feb-08	10.875%	8.28%	PIBD0408A140	13-Jan-09	12.00%	8.49%
PIBD0307G045	13-Jul-07	14.00%	7.84%	PIBD0308C115	10-Mar-08	16.99%	8.27%	PIBD0508B528	16-Jun-08	10.75%	8.49%

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From page A1

has prejudged the results of the government investigation into the Ultra stampede.

"[ABS-CBN chair and CEO] Gabby Lopez has already claimed moral responsibility, and ABS-CBN moved immediately to address the needs of the victims and their families. We continue to do so, focusing now on medium- and long-term assistance."

Ms Arroyo made the statement when asked to comment on the attempt of some sectors to put political color to the issue.

More than 70 were killed and hundreds more were injured when mostly unemployed people—many of whom had queued for days—scrambled to gain entry into the PhilSports Arena for the first anniversary show of "Wowowee."

Critics of the administration immediately blamed the government for the tragedy, saying it had failed to alleviate the plight of the poor. They cited the estimated 30,000 who endured the long queue in the hope of winning cash and other prizes.

But Malacañang officials protested what they said were attempts to use the issue of poverty against the President.

Government's role

Ms Arroyo told d2RH that the role of the government was to determine the circumstances behind the stampede and to bring justice to the victims and their families.

She said the investigation would be fair: "We should show that no one is above the law and that equal rights and equal justice will prevail over wealth or status."

"Whoever is found liable in the investigation should be held responsible."

The Department of Justice is currently investigating the stampede.

The Senate committee on justice and human rights has called for comments "under oath" from persons involved.

Sen. Joker Arroyo, acting chair of the committee, yesterday said letters had been sent out in preparation for an inquiry.

He said the hearings would start "as soon as we get answers that would be useful."

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago had earlier called for an inquiry "in aid of legislation on the criminal and civil liabilities of ABS-CBN and its security officials for the quasi-offense of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide and multiple grave physical injuries."

Santiago said an investigation was in order because the penal code had to be amended to raise the penalties for reckless imprudence and negligence, "particularly on the part of entertainment firms, including TV stations, that deliberately seek to attract big crowds of people beyond their capacity to manage, thus posing danger to life and limb among the masses."

Invitations

Ferdinand Lavin, National Capital Region executive officer of the National Bureau of Investigation, said the NBI was preparing to invite "Wowowee" host Willie Revillame to make a formal statement.

"It would only be fair to invite Revillame so he can give us his side," Lavin told reporters.

He said it was possible that the NBI would also invite top ABS-CBN executives to give their own statements this week.

Lavin said the bureau was in the process of taking the statements of the heads of Pasig City government offices.

"Through [their] statements and documents... we will determine whether they amply responded to ABS-CBN's request for assistance during the event," he said.

'Love' fills the halls of Congress

From page A1

most of the country's representatives were busy with their constituents or V-Day gimmicks.

At 4:34 p.m., Espinosa declared a lack of quorum.

But as early as 9 a.m., lawmakers were sending jokes and Valentine text messages to one another, some of which were forwarded to reporters covering the House.

It was Marinduque Rep. Edmund Reyes who fired the first of the love texts: "To a man who inspired virgins, comforted ladies, helped girls in need, shared so many beds and gave many women happy memories, Happy Valentine's Day, friend."

Aurora Rep. Juan Edgardo Angara forwarded this message: "This Valentine, may you be showered with girls, or be showered by girls, or be with girls in a shower... basta (so long as there are) many girls and many showers."

Not to be outdone, House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles of Davao, sent off a message greeting everyone's "maybahay, at sa yong mayapartment, maycondo, mayparlor at may scholarship (homemaker, apartment owner, condo owner, parlor owner and those on scholarship)."

Still another text message, sent by Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus, told the story of a man who married one woman "to escape many other women, and ended up chasing many other women to forget that he's married to one woman. What a romantic life! Cheers!" Lapus said.

Cookies and chocolates

Representatives Cynthia Villar of Las Piñas, Teodoro Guingona III of Bulidnon and Imee Marcos of Ilocos Sur gave away cookies and chocolates.

On Monday, Villar had sent out boxes of chocolate crinkles, while Guingona distributed Cadbury chocolates yesterday.

Marcos—famous for her heartthrob son Borgy Manotoc—handed out cookies filled with white chocolates. They came in red heart-shaped canisters.

Lavin said the NBI had coordinated with the Office of Pasig Mayor Vicente Eusebio and taken the statements of sacked Pasig police chief Senior Supt. Raul Medina; Richard Cua, chair of Barangay Oranbo, where PhilSports Arena is located, and Insp. Khadafy Bitor, officer in charge of the city's Traffic and Parking Management Division.

He said investigators were scheduled to meet with the chiefs of the Bureau of Fire Protection and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority units that responded to calls for assistance.

"So far, we have completed 60-70 percent of the investigation," Lavin said.

He said the NBI had obtained complete documentation on the deaths of 70 people, the medical certificates of the injured, and sworn statements from 30 vital witnesses.

Continuing aid

At the Bulong Pulungan forum, Tina Monzon-Palma, program director of ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Bata, said the network would not stop the aid it had been giving the stampede victims even if they decide to go to court.

She said, however, that the network could not do anything should the victims refuse help.

"I doubt it. I don't think [so]. All of these are most likely people who would file [a case], but we opted to assist them. But should they refuse [the aid], that's a different story," Palma said when asked if the network would cease helping the victims once a case had been filed.

The nongovernment anticrime group Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption had earlier offered to assist those who wished to file a class suit against the network.

Palma said that as of yesterday, nobody had approached ABS-CBN to seek a settlement in exchange for not filing a suit.

But she also said a class suit would help the victims: "It would be to the best interest of all of them. If they can hire individual lawyers, they will. But if they are not that well-off, they can go together to [VACC chair] Dante Jimenez and give all of their *salaysay* (statements) so we can deal with it."

By ABS-CBN's count, 71 people were killed and over 600 injured in the stampede.

71 Dreams Foundation

Fr. Carmelo Caluag, a member of the ABS-CBN board of directors, said at the same forum that the network had spent some P4 million in aid to the victims.

"It came out in the news. Their running tally is P4 million," he said when asked how much the network had spent so far to help the victims.

Caluag reiterated that the network was planning to set up a foundation to provide long-term aid not just to the families of those who died in the stampede but also to other less fortunate people.

He said the project, called the 71 Dreams Foundation, would provide material aid to and continually support and monitor the beneficiaries.

The program will also provide livelihood and education support, Caluag said, adding:

"It's not just a doleout. It's the classic distinction between giving them fish and teaching them to fish."

Palma said ABS-CBN had been segregating its show audiences, with the elderly and children assigned a separate line. She said network executives were also studying new ways to distribute tickets to its shows.

Earlier, Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus, head of the fact-finding body assigned to look into the stampede, said the people who had queued for the "Wowowee" anniversary show were "treated like animals." With reports from Margaux C. Ortiz and Philip C. Tubexa



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NEWSBRIEFS

Erap still has clout with poor, says GMA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-ARROYO YESTERDAY grudgingly admitted that deposed President Joseph Estrada had maintained his mass appeal despite being incarcerated in a Tanay rest house for the last five years.

This strong and resilient following of Estrada prompted Ms Arroyo to rekindle efforts to reconcile with her predecessor who recently met with another faction of the opposition led by former President Corason Aquino.

"I recognize that President Estrada still has a following and they see his current condition as a reflection of their own situation," Ms Arroyo said in a radio interview.

The President reiterated that she had always been for unity and reconciliation and that healing the wounds of Edsa was in the 10-point agenda she drew up at the start of her fresh six-year mandate in 2004.

Ms Arroyo, however, said that she would not intervene in the plunder case being faced by Estrada at the Sandiganbayan.

"As much as I am averse to other branches of government interfering in the affairs of the executive, I myself should not intervene in the judiciary on these issues," she said.

In Estrada's case, the President said: "It is important that process under the law is part of national unity and reconciliation."

Her chief of staff, Michael T. Defensor, had previously sounded out Malacañang's openness to giving Estrada temporary relief from jail through a recognizance.

Black hearts of protest

BEARING BLACK HEART-SHAPED PLACARDS, some 500 members of the militant Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) held a Valentine's Day protest at the Chino Roces (Mendiola) Bridge to press for a P3,000 across-the-board wage increase and the immediate payment of their cost of living allowances (Colas). "This government has impoverished teachers with its salary freeze policy and reduced real spending for public education by 5 percent, resulting in an alarming spike in the number of out-of-school youths," said ACT chair Antonio Tinio in a statement. Militant youth and students also held a rally at Plaza Miranda in Quiapo to celebrate Valentine's in a LovapalOS-ER teach-in.

Alvin Papa

Cha-cha info drive set

MULTISECTORAL GROUPS ARE SET TO GATHER in Manila today to kick off the nationwide Charter change information campaign. Dubbed "Sigaw ng Bayan," the pro-amendment gathering will be held at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium from 8 a.m. to noon. Spearheaded by the Kilusan ng Mamamayan para sa Matatag na Republika (KMMR) — the umbrella of more than 50 urban poor, farmer and fisher folk, student, youth leader and worker groups — "Sigaw" aims to articulate and educate the electorate on how best to tackle the issues affecting the 1987 Constitution.

Tina G. Santos

No funds to fight smuggling

THE LACK OF FUNDS TO BUILD AN AIRTIGHT case against big-time smugglers remained the biggest stumbling block to the government's antismuggling drive, according to Customs Deputy Commissioner Celso Templo. The Bureau of Customs did not even have an intelligence fund under its 2005 budget, except for P1 million allocated for the maintenance of its computers, he said. "Initially, the bureau needs [some money] to conduct a full-blown investigation and purchase vehicles and communications equipment," Templo said. "We have started the probe; we are gathering evidence and coordinating with other agencies." He called on Congress to provide the funds to provide the government with ammunition to go after smugglers.

Pinoys insist on 'palusot'

THE FILIPINOS' PENCHANT FOR *PALUSOT* (TRYING to get away with things) was the reason many of them continued to bring amulets made of bullets on their flights despite repeated warnings by airport authorities, Supt. Rizalino Roxas, Airport Security Center operations chief of the Manila International Airport Authority said yesterday. Between Feb. 4 and 7 alone, a MIAA statement said, 11 passengers were found carrying a total of 14 bullets. "The passengers, mostly OFWs, said the bullets were amulets they believed could bring them luck and protect them from evil spirits," the statement said. The passengers were held for questioning but were allowed to board their flights.

Nikko Dizon

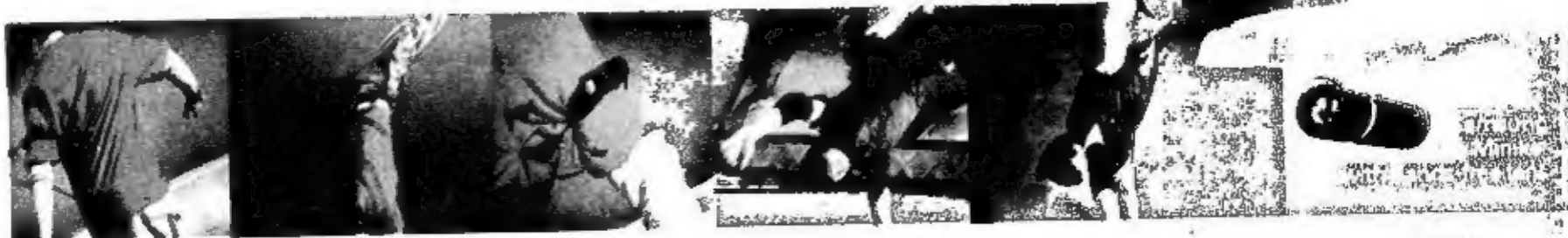
Airline raps new security

CATHAY PACIFIC AIRWAYS, THE LARGEST FOREIGN carrier operating at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NIA), complained yesterday about the new setup at the final security check at the airport, making it the first airline to openly criticize the innovation. "This new setup has been affecting all airlines' operational requirements," Eddie Monreal, Cathay Pacific station manager, told reporters. Tall wooden partitions have been placed at the two departure concourses of NIA Terminal 1 to segregate "sanitized" from "unsanitized" items and persons — those that had undergone security checks from those that had not. Monreal said the setup contributed to the delay of two Cathay Pacific flights yesterday by as much as 45 minutes. On Monday, one of its flights, as well as two of Northwest Airlines, were nearly delayed because of it.

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Ombudsman faces contempt...

From page A1

ruling of Jan. 13, 2004, that voided MegaPacific's contract to supply the Comelec with 1,991 automated counting machines because the deal was tainted with "graft and legal infirmities."

In the decision penned by then Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban, the Ombudsman was asked to identify the Comelec officials who may be held criminally liable for the awarding of the contract to the two firms in the MegaPacific consortium.

The Office of the Solicitor General was also asked to take measures to recover the P800 million initially paid to MegaPacific for the counting machines.

The high court's order to Gutierrez came a day after Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo, a former Comelec chair, told senators that he was in possession of documents showing that the MegaPacific contract was overpriced by as much as P500 million.

Benipayo said the Comelec had already paid MegaPacific P1.3 billion.

Mental dishonesty

Reacting to the allegation of an overprice, Abalos threatened to sue Benipayo for libel.

Abalos accused Benipayo, his predecessor as Comelec chief, of "mental dishonesty," saying that overpricing was impossible because the agency, as part of bidding procedures, pre-determined the cost of the counting machines at P1.3 billion.

The amount was set when Benipayo was still head of the Comelec, Abalos told reporters at a press conference.

Abalos said the estimate was reached after the Comelec consulted groups like the election watchdog National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections.

"If you bid out a project, you can't go beyond the agency's estimate. We were actually able to get the ACMs at a price much lower than the estimate. So



ABALOS



BENIPAYO

where's the overpricing in that?" he said.

Abalos recalled that after he took over as chair, the Comelec was able to secure a deal with MegaPacific for 1,600 ACMs for P1.2 billion.

Abalos was appointed chair of the Comelec on June 5, 2002. The poll body awarded the contract to MegaPacific on April 13, 2003.

Korean firm

MegaPacific may have paid only P500 million to the Korean firm that manufactured the counting machines but the remaining amount could have been used by the consortium for other components of the deal, according to Abalos.

"The deal included hardware, software, security and logistics. I don't know how the consortium actually used the money. For all you know, the software could have been more costly," he said.

He downplayed the findings of Ombudsman graft investigators that he had close ties with other MegaPacific's incorporators.

The investigators noted that Abalos and MegaPacific incorporator Pedro Tan had stood as sponsors in the wedding of a son of two other MegaPacific incorporators, spouses Enrique and Rosita Tansipek.

"With the relationship of

spouses Enrique and Rosita Tansipek and Pedro Tan with Abalos, prudence dictates that Abalos inhibit himself from the whole process," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. had quoted the investigators as saying.

But Abalos said that his alleged close ties with some of the incorporators could not be used against him because he had known many Filipino-Chinese in his long career as a politician.

"I had been a judge, a mayor... With all those positions, I met a lot of people but that does not mean that they're close to me," he said.

Trip to Seoul

Pimentel had said Abalos and other Comelec commissioners also "committed an act of impropriety" when they and their wives traveled to Seoul in 2003 to visit the plant of the Korean firm.

He said he was informed that the plane tickets and hotel accommodations for the trip were bankrolled by the Korean company, contradicting Abalos' claim that the expenses for the trip were paid for out of the P1 million he won in a golf tournament in Wack Wack, Mandaluyong.

Resign

"If Chairman Abalos is telling the truth, I challenge him to produce the plane tickets, vouchers

and other documents to support his claim," Pimentel said.

Sen. Joker Arroyo, chair of the Senate blue ribbon committee, said Abalos and all the Comelec commissioners implicated in the MegaPacific deal would have to resign before the country's electoral system could be computerized.

"That is what we should work for. Not only because of what happened but because we can never have automation for as long as they are there," Arroyo said.

Abalos had insisted that nothing was illegal about the contract and that the Supreme Court ruling nullifying it did not stop the Comelec from using the automated machines to count ballots.

Arroyo said the high court had said that Abalos and his fellow commissioners should "refrain from implementing any other contract or agreement entered into with regard to the (automated election) project."

Arroyo said the Senate could not approve the Comelec request for P1 billion to computerize the country's election system until Abalos and the other commissioners resigned.

He said the present Comelec commissioners were "estopped" by the Supreme Court decision from advocating automated elections or from having anything to do with it "because of their past record."

"So, we cannot approve it because they're still there. Now, if they are not, then we can appropriate the money," Arroyo said. "How can we have a plain and honest election if they're the ones there? They can't even conduct a clean and honest bidding."

The Senate earlier adopted the report of its blue ribbon committee which said that the Comelec commissioners' illegal actions in the MegaPacific deal had put in jeopardy the holding of credible elections in the country.

The committee report said that if the election commissioners did not resign, the "most feasible way to remove them was for the Om-

SC okays filing of charges against Marcopper officials

From page A1

plaints filed against them by the Department of Justice.

They have been charged with violating the Water Code, National Pollution Control decree and reckless imprudence resulting in damage to property.

In their petition, the Marcopper executives sought the dismissal of the case for "being duplicitous" because the DOJ filed more than one charge for a single incident of polluting the Boac and Makulapnit rivers.

They also insisted that they were not yet officers of Marcopper when the alleged offenses were committed.

However, the three had told the lower court that they were willing to be arraigned on the criminal charge of reckless imprudence, which carries a minimum penalty of 21 days in jail.

The Supreme Court noted that "the prosecution charged each petitioner with four offenses, with each information charging only one offense."

"Thus, petitioners erroneously invoke duplicity of charges as a ground to quash the informations. On this score alone, the petition deserves outright denial," the court said.

In October last year, the Marinduque provincial government filed a lawsuit in Nevada accusing Canadian mining giant Placer Dome Inc. of damaging the environment and the health of people on the island.

Placer Dome operated Marcopper when a rock formation around the plug near a drainage tunnel fractured on March 24, 1996, sending millions of tons of open-pit copper mine waste down the 26-km Makulapnit and Boac rivers to the provincial capital.

The following year, Placer Dome cut ties to the Philippines after 33 years of mining on the island.

The cleanup was left to Philippine subsidiaries, according to the lawsuit filed in Nevada by Marinduque Gov. Carmencita Reyes. The complaint said that the subsidiaries did a bad job protecting residents from the ill effects of the tainted air, land and water.

Reyes said Placer Dome had disappeared and ignored pleas from the Marinduque government. She said that the spill had caused "unspeakable poverty and devastation" on the island that used to be a peaceful tropical paradise.

The lawsuit alleges that forests, river basins and coral reefs have been smothered by hundreds of thousands of pulverized mining waste rock and toxic tailings laden with arsenic, cadmium, lead, manganese, nickel and sulfate.

But a spokesperson for Placer Dome has said that the Canadian mining company had only a 40-percent interest in Marcopper and was thus spared by Philippine law from the full responsibilities of a majority shareholder. *With a report from Christine Gaylican*

budsman to file criminal charges against them."

The committee said the Supreme Court, in an August

2003 resolution, rejected the notion that Comelec commissioners cannot be criminally charged before they are impeached.

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Your Excellency:

The Philippine Plastics Industry Association, Inc. (PPIA), representing more than 1,000 fabricators and converters of plastic resins and employing over 500,000 workers, express our whole-hearted thanks for the issuance of Executive Order No. 486. The EO corrects the tariff distortion that made our industry uncompetitive due to the higher duties on raw materials than those of competing finished plastic products. We use plastic resins and convert them into packaging, industrial and consumer products. Plastics have grown into a major industry cutting across industries like packaging; appliances; household and industrial items; personal care; automotive, construction and housing, and agriculture/ aquaculture inputs.

We are likewise grateful to DTI Secretary Peter Favila, NEDA Director General Augusto Santos, DOF Secretary Margarito Teves, DBM Secretary Romulo Neri and all the members of the Cabinet Tariff and Related Matters Committee for steadfastly supporting our advocacy of leveling the playing field for the downstream plastics industry.

The reduction in duty is a big relief to both the plastic producers and consumers as it will soften the impact of the 2 percent increase in the VAT rate this month and the rising cost of plastic resins in the world market. The reduction will lead to a 10 percent increase in consumption of plastic resins and will have a multiplier effect as plastic manufacturing go through many labor-intensive stages. These include the preparation of the plastic resins i.e. mixing with additives/ colorants or compounding before extruding, molding, forming or laminating the plastic product, and additional workers are needed for the cutting, printing, labeling, packing and warehousing stages. All these activities are expected to expand in the process.

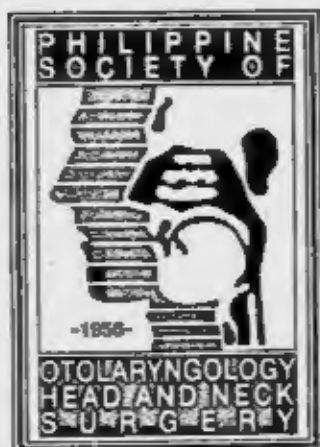
Once again, thank you for helping the plastic industry during these difficult times as the issuance of EO 486 will not only preserve but generate more jobs.

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The Philippine Society of Otolaryngology- Head and Neck Surgery turns

50



Centennial Hall, The Manila Hotel, February 17, 2006 (Friday) 1:00 PM

GOLDEN JUBILEE PROGRAM

- 1:00 pm **Mass**
- 2:00 pm **Opening of Art & Booth Exhibits**
- 3:00 pm **Snacks**
- 3:30 pm **Inspirational Talks**
Dr. Thierry F. Garcia
Dr. Ariston G. Bautista
Dr. Napoleon C. Ejercito
- 4:15 pm **PSO-HNS Clinical Practice Guidelines Ratification**
Dr. Ruzanne M. Caro & Dr. Jose M. Acuin
- 5:00 pm **MOA Signing of Kalusugang Ear Nose and Throat (PSO-HNS and ULCH)**
Dr. Natividad A. Almazan-Aguilar
- 5:30 pm **Dinner Lecture**
- 6:00 pm **Anniversary Dinner Ball**
Invocation / National Anthem
St. Luke's VSSC ENT Choir
Welcome Address and Cordial Greetings
Dr. Cesar V. Villafuerte Jr.
Cordial Greetings from PBO-HNS President
Dr. Abelardo B. Perez
DVD Presentation of the PSO-HNS Today
Dr. Peter R. Jarin
Special Presentation
St. Luke's VSSC ENT Singers
Toast
Dr. Natividad A. Almazan-Aguilar
Awards
Dr. Jacob S. Matubis
- Recognition to Founders (Heroic 9)
 - Recognition to Past Presidents
- Presentation of the PSO-HNS Chapters**
- Closing Remarks and Invitation to Dance**
Dr. Felix P. Nolasco
- Live Band**
- Masters of Ceremonies:**
Dr. Ma. Teresa Villareal-Que
Dr. Alberto Calderon

February 17, 2006 marks another milestone in our history as we celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the Philippine Society of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the Centennial Hall of The Manila Hotel. Join us as we pay tribute to the founding fathers who bravely fought and stood firm through the more challenging phases of the society's life.

This is also the most opportune time to reaffirm our commitment and uphold our mission as a premier specialty group on Otolaryngology.

The Kalusugang Ear Nose and Throat will be launched to stimulate awareness and provide basic education about common E.N.T. diseases among laymen. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I invite everyone to attend this historic event.



Natividad A. Almazan-Aguilar, MD, MSClin.Epi
President, PSO-HNS, Inc.

On behalf of the organizing committee of the Golden Anniversary Celebration, I wish to welcome all the fellows and guests to the 50th Anniversary of the PSO-HNS, Inc. This is indeed a very momentous occasion for our surgical specialty as we gather together to give honor to our "Heroic 9" founders and to all the past presidents of our society, as well as to remember and treasure the history of our organization as it traveled through the years.

May God bless the PSO-HNS! Mabuhay!



Cesar V. Villafuerte Jr., MD, MHA
Past President, PSO-HNS, Inc.
Chair, Golden Anniversary Committee



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Standing from left to right: Alexander C. Cabungcal, MD (Secretary), Felix P. Nolasco, MD (Immediate Past President), Gil M. Vicente, MD, Jacob S. Matubis, MD, Romeo L. Villarta Jr., MD, Alfredo Q.Y. Pontejos Jr., MD, William L. Lim, MD (Auditor) and Antonio H. Chua, MD (Treasurer)

Sitting from left to right: Eutrapio S. Guevara Jr., MD, Abelardo B. Perez, MD (PBO-HNS President), Natividad A. Aguilar, MD (PSO-HNS President), Charlotte M. Chiong, MD (Vice-President) and Francisco A. Victoria, MD



FOUNDERS
From left to right: (†)Dr. Cesar Villafuerte Sr., (†)Dr. Vicente Songco, (†)Dr. Angel Enriquez, Dr. Napoleon Ejercito, (†)Dr. Macario G. Tan, Dr. Thierry F. Garcia

Other founding members (not in photo): (†)Dr. Antonio Vicencio, (†)Dr. Jose Antonio L. Roxas Sr., Dr. Ariston G. Bautista

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Saddam goes on hunger strike

BAGHDAD—SADDAM HUSSEIN AND THREE former officials in his regime on Tuesday told the court trying them they were on a hunger strike in protest of the judge overseeing the proceedings.

Saddam said he had not eaten in three days, while his former intelligence chief, Ibrahim Barzan, said he had not eaten for two days. Two other defendants, Awad Bandar and former Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan, also said they were on strike.

Their claims of a hunger strike could not be independently confirmed. The defendants are being

held under US detention and US officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

But investigative judge Raid Juhi did not deny that the defendants were refusing food when asked about the strike. AP

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- ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT February 21 - March 21, 2006 Tuesday 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH February 22 - March 22, 2006 Wed. 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS February 24 - March 24, 2006 Friday 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- SECURITY MANAGEMENT February 25 - March 11, 2006 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
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Iran defies West, starts enrichment work

VIENNA—IRAN HAS RESTARTED URANIUM enrichment work by putting its feedstock gas into centrifuges, defying the West with a program that could make nuclear reactor fuel or atom bomb material, diplomats told AFP Monday.

It came as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad insisted his country was not worried about possible sanctions and Tehran said talks in Moscow aimed at finding a compromise to the long-running international standoff would not go ahead as planned later this week.

Uranium enrichment is seen as a red line by the United States and European Union in the dispute over Iran's nuclear program, as it is crucial to making atomic weapons.

Putting uranium hexafluoride (UF6) gas into centrifuges, which distill out enriched uranium, is a major escalation by Iran, and comes amid threats by the Islamic republic to withdraw from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In an interview published Monday, Ahmadinejad said that nations calling for economic sanctions would lose far more than Tehran.

"I believe those who want to impose limitations on us will lose more than us," he told

USA Today newspaper in an interview conducted Saturday.

Separately, Iran said Thursday's planned talks between Tehran and Moscow on a compromise to enrich uranium on Tehran's behalf in Russia, so that it would not acquire the strategic technology, would not go ahead.

Russia however said talks could still be held.

The United States and EU governments fear Iran's nuclear program could hide atomic weapons development, a claim strongly denied by Tehran which says it is for strictly peaceful civilian nuclear power.

Iran had earlier Monday said it would resume uranium enrichment even before the UN watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meets in Vienna next month to decide whether to recommend UN Security Council action.

Meanwhile French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin arrived in Moscow for a 24-hour visit due to include talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Villepin said in an interview published Monday in a Russian newspaper that the international community was willing to negoti-

ate with Iran on the nuclear crisis if Tehran took steps to end the standoff.

But diplomats' comments in Vienna appear to show Iran is following through with its threat to carry out enrichment.

"Iran has put gas into centrifuges at its pilot enrichment plant in Natanz," one diplomat said.

The diplomat, who asked not to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue, said Iran had not yet fired up the whole 164-centrifuge cascade but had "over the past two or three days" started work with some centrifuges.

A second diplomat said Iran was doing "preliminary work" with "stand-alone" centrifuges, almost certainly putting uranium gas into single machines rather than a whole cascade.

The diplomat said this was necessary in a step-by-step approach involving first getting centrifuges running, then operating a pilot plant, which Iran has dubbed research work, and then moving on to industrial-scale enrichment with thousands of centrifuges.

Iran says it wants to produce low enriched uranium, which is not refined enough for weapons.

But it wants to install over 50,000 cen-

trifuges at Natanz, an array which could produce enough highly enriched uranium every two or three weeks for one atom bomb.

IAEA inspectors are Tuesday to visit Natanz, where Iran is threatening to remove surveillance seals and cameras, diplomats said.

But one diplomat said some seals and surveillance cameras would remain in place as they would be monitoring the production of nuclear fuel rather than enrichment.

Although Iran had suspended uranium enrichment work until talks with an EU negotiating troika broke down last month, it has since August been making the feedstock UF6 at a conversion plant in Isfahan.

The West has seemed ready to let Tehran pursue this work, which technically is part of the activities the EU says should be suspended, as long as it did not actually enrich.

The IAEA's 35-nation board of governors voted Feb. 4 to report Iran to the Security Council, but left a one-month window for diplomacy on getting it to return to a full suspension of enrichment-related work and co-operate more with IAEA inspectors. AFP



CUPID-STRUCK

Veiled Bangladeshi girls walk with flowers on Valentine's Day in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Feb. 14. Valentine's Day is being celebrated in this Muslim-majority, traditionally Conservative country.

Protests mar Haiti vote counting

PORT AU-PRINCE—AN ERUPTION OF GUN fire left one person dead Monday in Port-au-Prince, amid protests over the result of Haiti's presidential election.

UN peacekeepers deployed around the Haitian capital, where crowds protested partial results that showed front-runner Rene Preval narrowly missing the 50 percent he needs to be elected president without going to a second round.

Television footage showed the lifeless body of a man wearing a bloodied T-shirt with the picture of Rene Preval, a former president who enjoys widespread support among the poor.

A UN spokesperson denied claims by demonstrators that a member of the 9,500-strong UN Stabilization Force in Haiti (Minustah) shot at protesters, saying the troops had only fired two shots in the air.

Spokesperson David Wilmhurst said gunfire erupted after the troops had left the immediate vicinity of the incident, near Port-au-Prince's international airport.

There were also reports that several people were wounded.

At one stage, a small group of protesters hurled rocks at a Nigerian peacekeeper, who emerged unhurt and eventually managed to calm down the crowd.

Preval followers used car wrecks, rocks and burning tires to block major avenues, paralyzing the city and causing businesses to shutter their doors.

The situation calmed down after word spread that Preval had flown in from his hometown of Marmelade. Preval held talks with UN Special Envoy Juan Gabriel Vaidez at the airport before heading to the presidential palace to discuss the situation with interim President Boniface Alexandre.

Meanwhile, Brazil, which leads the UN force, asked the United States to organize a UN Security Council meeting on the new tensions in Haiti. The United States, council president for February, urged Haitians to respect the outcome of the elections.

Crowds gathered outside the headquarters of the Provisional Electoral Offices (CEP) demanding that Preval be declared president immediately and claiming the vote count was fraudulent.

They also stormed the gates of the Montana hotel, where the CEP had announced partial results in past days. Demonstrators jumped into the pool of the luxury hotel, and danced on the tennis court, chanting "Preval president." UN helicopters landed reinforcements on the roof.

Former South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu urged the demonstrators to remain calm and leave the hotel, which they eventually did.

"You must show the world that you abhor fighting," the Nobel peace laureate said, speaking from a hotel terrace. AFP



Government Warning is dangerous

French doctors to study Joan of Arc's ashes



French Dr. Philippe Charlier displays the supposed remains of 15th century French heroine Joan of Arc, Feb. 13, in Garches, west of Paris. The barrage of tests led by Charlier could shed light on what are believed to be the remains of the 19-year-old, mainly bones and skin recovered from the fire that consumed her in 1431 in Rouen.

PARIS—FRENCH DOCTORS ARE TO study the ashes of the 15th-century maiden-warrior Joan of Arc, who was burned at the stake at age 19, in a quest for new insight into the extraordinary life of a young woman who became a national icon.

Philippe Charlier, the forensic scientist behind the project, told AFP that his team would spend six months analyzing relics said to be from her fire, including bone fragments, human tissue and wood.

By studying the relics' biochemical and molecular makeup, they hope to precisely date and authenticate them but also perhaps to discover new facts about the French military heroine made a saint by the Roman Catholic Church.

A combination of carbon dating techniques and analysis of pollen traces will allow them to pinpoint the relics' age down to the exact year and month.

"We will be able to say: these are the remains of a woman who died in Rouen (in northern France), aged 19, who died in 1431 around May 30, and who was burned three times in the same day," Charlier said.

If all of the above can be confirmed, he said, "we will know with near certainty that this is indeed Joan of Arc."

Born to a humble home in eastern France but inspired by what she believed to be divine voices, Joan of Arc (1412-1431) helped France to wrest the advantage back from England toward the end of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453).

Wounded in battle, she was captured and sold to the English, to be convicted of heresy and burned at the stake.

Joan of Arc's extraordinary destiny has been a source of fascination to French writers from Voltaire to the present day, who have recre-

ated the Maid of Orleans, as she was known, as everything from a saint to the victim of a sinister Church plot.

Her claim to divine inspiration, and success in repulsing the English invader, made her a potent symbol of the emergence of the French nation.

She later became a mythical inspiration for France's Catholic nationalists and has been controversially adopted as the emblem of Jean-Marie Le Pen's far-right National Front party, which celebrates her memory every year.

Charlier said however that he was driven purely by scientific curiosity and was unaffected by the tug-of-war over Joan of Arc's legacy.

"There is no nationalist goal behind this, no religious or political angle—it is just a scientific and historical investigation," he said.

Joan of Arc's ashes—preciously

guarded by a French historical association and currently the property of the Roman Catholic Church authorities in Tours, southwest of Paris—are the only remaining traces of her.

"In reality, we know hardly anything of Joan of Arc. We do not even have a drawing of her—except an outline sketched at the bottom of a legal document," Charlier told Le Parisien newspaper.

"Even the armor attributed to her is actually largely posthumous."

Initially a figurehead who revealed herself as a true military leader, Joan of Arc led the French armies in lifting the English siege of Orleans in 1429, the first of a chain of swift victories that ended with the French dauphin's coronation as Charles VII.

She was rehabilitated by the Catholic Church a quarter-century after her death, and canonized in 1920. **AFP**

New fish species, seaweeds found off Caribbean

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO—SCIENTISTS have discovered what they believe is a new fish species and at least 20 types of previously unknown seaweeds during a recent expedition to one of the Caribbean's most diverse marine areas—a coral-covered underwater mountain off the Dutch island of Saba.

It could take a year before researchers confirm the findings, which local fishermen, working with the Dutch Antilles government, are hoping to use to lobby authorities to steer oil tankers away from the Saba Bank Atoll to protect their livelihoods and the rich underwater life.

During their two weeks at the atoll, divers braved 12-foot seas to plunge 30 meters under water twice daily to collect marine samples. Their efforts turned up unique striped patterns on the seaweeds and one fish that researchers believe is new to science: a goby with orange spots.

"We were literally discovering a species every day, that's truly remarkable," said Michael Smith, a senior research scientist at Conservation International, which funded the January expedition along with the Netherlands Ministry of Traffic and Water Management and Miami-based cruise operator Royal Caribbean's Ocean Fund.

"There aren't very many places where you can still do that in the Caribbean or very close to North America."

Not to be outdone by the fish discovery were the seaweed findings. Smith called the area "the epicenter of diversity for seaweeds in the Caribbean."

Mark Littler, a marine biologist at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, said his dives revealed landscapes that he compared to "mini rain forests." They swam through acres of red, green and brown seaweed—some that looked like ferns or were several feet high. **AP**

WORLD BRIEFS

Blast kills 4 US soldiers

KABUL—Four US soldiers were killed in a bomb blast in insurgency-plagued Afghanistan Monday as five militia troops contracted to the US-led coalition and an Afghan soldier also died in attacks, officials said. A purported spokesperson for the Taliban, removed from government in a US-led operation in 2001, claimed responsibility on behalf of the ultra-Islamic movement for the blast against the American troops. They were on patrol in volatile Uruzgan province with the Afghan army when their Humvee vehicle hit a suspected improvised explosive device, the coalition said in a statement. "Shortly after the attack, the patrol was engaged with small arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire." **AFP**

2 Kenyan ministers resign

NAIROBI—Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki on Monday accepted the resignations of two more senior Cabinet ministers implicated in massive corruption scandals that have rocked the east African nation. In a live televised address, Kibaki said Energy Minister Kiraitu Murungi and Education Minister George Saitoti had asked to resign after having been named as players in the so-called "Goldenberg" and "Anglo Leasing" scams. "I have today accepted the request by (Saitoti) to step aside from his responsibilities... to pave the way for investigations into the issues raised in the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Goldenberg affair," he said. **AFP**

Man nabbed for Iraq abuse

LONDON—British military police have made an arrest in connection with a probe into video footage apparently showing British troops abusing civilians in Iraq, the defense ministry said Monday. A military spokesperson told AFP that the arrest was made Sunday "in conjunction with this investigation" but declined to say where it took place or confirm whether the person was a serving soldier. "The RMP (Royal Military Police) investigation into these extremely serious allegations is at very early stage," the spokesperson said. The ministry has ordered an "urgent investigation" into the video which aired on British television Sunday after the mass-circulation tabloid, News of the World, broke the story and showed photo stills from the video. **AFP**

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Indivisible freedoms

LAST FRIDAY, A FUNERAL WAS HELD IN ROME FOR Fr. Andrea Santoro, a missionary priest killed the week before in Turkey. Camillo Cardinal Ruini of Rome announced at the funeral that he wanted to open the process for the beatification and eventual canonization of the priest. Santoro, he said, was a martyr. He was definitely a kind and pious man. Pope Benedict XVI ordered a letter Santoro wrote to him,

EDITORIAL on behalf of three Catholic women asking the Pope to visit their parish, published in *Osservatore Romano*, the official Vatican newspaper.

In Turkey, the person accused of killing Santoro "admitted that he was driven by hatred aroused by the publication of the caricatures of Mohammed published in the Western press," according to one press account. The accused murderer was under the impression that Santoro was actively trying to convert Muslims to Catholicism. In fact, the Italian's ministry was to attend to small, isolated Catholic communities in areas that once comprised the Catholic settlements of antiquity.

While praising the Christian virtues of Santoro, and proclaiming his worthiness to be considered a martyr—proof of which would immediately result in sainthood—Vatican officials have been careful not to lay blame at the doorstep of Islam, whether as a religion or a community. The kind of misunderstanding that would lead a man to kill another, in the name of God, all because of a profoundly irreligious act that took place a very long distance away, is in a sense a parable for our times. Thornton Wilder, in his short novel "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," tackled a profoundly religious question. In the book, a monk named Brother Juniper witnesses the "finest bridge in all Peru" collapse, killing five people. And he asks, "Why did it happen to those five?"

As a consequence of editorial cartoons being published in a Danish newspaper, the world has been asking the same question—in the Middle East, where, from Damascus and Teheran to Palestine and Baghdad, Muslims erupted in fury. Just as they did in Denmark itself, and all over Europe; and everywhere, from Pakistan and Indonesia to the Philippines, where Islamic communities are found. Days of anger and violence have resulted in the Islamic world engaging in soul-searching of its own. Yesterday, a meeting between the Danish prime minister and the leaders of Denmark's Muslim community led to calls on their co-religionists to "move on."

Excesses such as rioting and complications such as some irresponsible provocateurs inserting two cartoons (the most offensive ones) among the real cartoons circulated among Muslims aside, the Islamic world has been adamant about its belief that the Western press crossed the line. Non-Muslims have also observed that what the Western media attempted to paint as purely a question of freedom of expression was not that at all; it was a question of secular contempt for religious conventions.

While the Philippines adheres to the principle of the separation of Church and State, and indeed, the Philippine media are heir to a tradition of anticlericalism dating to the Propaganda Movement, as a whole, Filipinos are profoundly respectful of religious conventions. Even the bigotry of certain Filipinos toward their Islamic countrymen does not extend to flagrantly heaping contempt on their faith. There are lines Filipinos do not cross, and rightly so (if only we did not cross more of them than we already do).

Islam and Christianity both pay the highest tribute to martyrs. Even secular societies consider martyrdom possible in defense of country or ideology. The question is whether any kind of creed, including secularism as understood in the West, calls for provocations that make it inevitable for people to become martyrs, whether unintentionally or by design. While we do not counsel self-censorship arising out of fear, we do believe that a proper recognition of the central role faith plays in the lives of millions would go far to avoid undue provocation against people who take their religion seriously. After all, since World War II, the world has rallied to defend the Four Freedoms: of speech and expression; of every person to worship God in his own way; from want; and from fear. They all go hand in hand, and to raise one over the other diminishes them all.



What's a police community precinct for?

(Continued from last Monday)

THE INTERSECTION ON COMMONWEALTH Avenue and Tandang Sora in Quezon City is a dangerous place to cross. Commonwealth slopes down here and vehicles coming from the Quezon Memorial Circle race down the incline as they battle for the commuters waiting for rides near the corner. There is a waiting shed farther up, but nobody uses it. There is a pedestrian lane and yellow boxes clearly marked on the pavement, but drivers pay no attention to them. They speed on as though in a race, and woe to pedestrians who happen to be in their way.

Even when there are traffic enforcers, they do not stop the vehicles to allow pedestrians to cross safely. Jeepneys stop right on top of the pedestrian lane, beside a big "Strictly No Loading/Unloading, SB" sign, to load and unload passengers. Bikers standing beside the sign call for passengers. The enforcers see all these but do nothing. The policemen in the police community precinct headquarters also see these but also do nothing.

The Metro Manila Development Authority tried to remedy the situation by constructing a pedestrian overpass across Commonwealth during the 2004 election campaign, with a big billboard announcing it to be a project of President Macapagal-Arroyo, complete with her smiling face. After the elections, construction was stopped and the billboard was taken away. The overpass remains unfinished and pedestrians still have to risk their lives when they cross the street.

I asked MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando about this, and he replied that he had suspended the construction because there were no more funds and also because the foot of the southern end of the overpass was in the wrong place. Commonwealth will be widened some more, he said, and the stairs going up the overpass will have to be moved nearer to the Mercury Drug Store and the KFC fast-food outlet.

Happily, there are signs that the widening of

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

Commonwealth in the area will begin soon and the overpass will be finished. Meanwhile, can't the authorities tell the police and traffic enforcers to enforce traffic rules and stop vehicles at the pedestrian lane to allow pedestrians to cross safely?

I asked Fernando why the police in the community precinct headquarters do not help maintain orderly traffic, and he said the MMDA has not deputized them. "Maybe we will," he added.

I posed the same question to top police officials and they replied that it is the duty of every policeman to help maintain traffic whether or not he is deputized by the MMDA. They promised to look into the matter.

That was weeks ago. Until now, there has been no change in the behavior of the police or traffic enforcers, whether they are the MMDA's Blueshirts or City Hall's Yellowshirts.

What is a police community precinct for if it cannot impose law and order in its place of assignment? Is this not the reason it was put there in the first place? If people see drivers violating traffic rules with impunity in the presence of cops and traffic aides, they are tempted to also violate traffic rules. They lose respect for the law and the police.

When the widening of Commonwealth is completed, I suggest that the two waiting sheds be painted in the trademark "Fernando pink" to make them more visible. Also there should be benches so commuters can sit down while waiting and either a rope or steel railings should be put up to make them fall in line. Two more waiting sheds, one on each side of the street, at the eastern foot of the flyover should be built.

But can't the police keep the vendors on the

sidewalk at the talipapa on Luzon Avenue so they don't spill out into the street and constrict the passage of vehicles?

The jeepney terminal at the corner of Tandang Sora should be removed. The Tandang Sora jeepney route can run from Aurora Boulevard to Novalliches, thus making the terminals behind the University of the Philippines campus and at the Commonwealth corner unnecessary. And the "No Parking, No Loading/Unloading" rule should be strictly enforced.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao, MM DA Chair Bayani Fernando and Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte should visit the place incognito so they can see for themselves what's going on.

 The two-day air talks between the governments of the Philippines and Bahrain will begin tomorrow in Clark Air Base. According to sources, the Philippines is prepared to give Bahrain all it is asking for—to the detriment of overseas Filipino workers, local business and industry, and our national aviation policy.

Bahrain is a tiny island in the Persian Gulf that hosts only 30,000 OFWs and produces only 1,800 tourists to the Philippines each year. But its appetite is very big. Its flag carrier deploys 61,000 seats to Manila per year and now wants to increase this to 107,000. At the air talks, Bahrain will ask that the present four flights weekly on the Manila-Bahrain route be increased to 10 flights. It has existing rights to fly to Cebu and Clark twice weekly each but has never exercised those rights.

What should have priority is a new air agreement with Saudi Arabia, not with Bahrain. We have about a million OFWs in Saudi Arabia but Philippine Airlines announced a suspension of Manila-Riyadh flights because it has been losing on the route for decades. It has proposed instead a new Manila-Dubai-Saudi Arabia route. The Philippine air panel should concentrate on this instead of pampering the Bahrainis.

Zombied

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



reason is that, next to the Beatles and Rolling Stones, the Zombies were the United Kingdom's most important musical export in the 1960s. Two of the Beatles are dead, but Paul McCartney is still alive and kicking. So are the Rolling Stones, their concert in the United States last year being sold out months in advance. I doubt they can be brought over to this country soon, the cost probably being humongous. And I don't quite know if McCartney has forgiven this country for being chased out of it by a mob led by Marcos' henchmen, when the Beatles gigged here in the 1960s. So I thought the next best thing would be to watch the Zombies. Maybe the spark of genius was still there.

The genius was in sheer abundance when they first burst into the scene in the mid-1960s. "Burst on the scene" is the only way to describe it. I recall somebody writing that the Zombies began at the top and worked their way to the bottom. "She's Not There" was an instant hit as well indeed as many of the other songs they wrote in the first flush of inspiration. They would suffer a dissipation of talent over the next two or three years and dim out like a meteor. But at the top of their form, they blazed so furiously they were being talked about as the group to knock out the Beatles in the pantheon of rock. Few other groups had the same range and versatility. Later Jim Morrison and Ray Manzarek would combine voice and keyboard to produce the music of The Doors. But well before them, Colin Blunstone and Rod Argent would do exactly that and produce, well, the magic of the Zombies.

I was in high school at the time, and I still remember the excitement with which we listened to the Zombies songs and tried to play

them on guitar. The group didn't just have subtlety and finesse, courtesy of Blunstone's breathy voice and Argent's intricate keyboard runs (he grew up on American blues and jazz), it also had a tough and wiry edge to it, extending the possibilities of rock. Hard to believe now after Led Zeppelin and the metal rockers of the 1970s, but in the mid-1960s we thought the Zombies were wild and loud! They were certainly iconoclastic and subversive, the true signs of rock.

Did the Zombies concert (I saw the one in Araneta) give off sparks of what they once were? Well, yes and no. Blunstone still has one of the best voices around, but he has lost much of its depth and mystery. It's not just that he's lost the breathiness or airiness, it's much more than that. He's lost a great deal of his spirit. An impression that was deepened by the songs he sang from the 1970s, after the Zombies broke up and Blunstone and Argent went their separate ways, Argent forming his own band and Blunstone joining other groups. The dissipation of talent became even more palpable, the songs passing on from classic to mediocre, from rebellious to conformist, from rock to karaoke. How could they have risen so high and fallen so low?

I understand that when they were no longer making hits in the 1960s, they began asking themselves what they were doing wrong, or at least what they stopped doing right. The answer was right there before them, in the Beatles and the Rolling Stones which would go on and break records in longevity. To this day, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards are still rocking and rolling. They did lose something, the Zombies, and that was the capacity to reinvent themselves, to subvert themselves. They became, well, zombies.

The last song they sang last Monday by way of encore was "How We Were Before." It begins: "Party's over, dawn breaking gradually through on us/ Shows us how we were before."

I kind of thought it was a fitting commentary to a lot more than the close of the concert.

A frenzy of assigning blame

THE STAMPEDE AT ULTRA, IN WHICH 74 PEOPLE were crushed to death and up to 500 others were injured, has ignited a feeding frenzy in the media in search of scapegoats.

Two weeks after the tragedy, an immediate investigation launched by the government is still far from determining criminal responsibility for the loss of human lives; the proprietors of ABS-CBN, sponsor of the "Wowowee" show, after pledging that the network "would take care of all costs," have not come up with concrete offers of compensation; and a number of theories have been put forward to try to explain the disaster.

What seems clear, however, is that the explanations tend to spread the blame, like in fish trawling, over a wide area of explanations, including sociological or pseudo-sociology, tracing the tragedy to poverty, blaming the government, the victims, and, worst of all, the flawed Filipino culture of jumping the queue and fostering mendacity.

Historically speaking, the aftermath of the Ultra tragedy is no different than that of a long chain of previous disasters, including mudslides, flooding, marine disasters and forest fires, and fires in overcrowded discos (like the one in Quezon City several years ago). In all these, what has been predictable is the feeding frenzy of blame whose targets include government neglect, depletion of forests by predatory loggers, laxity in enforcing safety regulations.

No one, as far as I can remember, has been appropriately punished, and the most ridiculous compensation was the P10,000 awarded to each of the victims of the Ozone Disco, following a guilty verdict handed down by a Quezon City court for something like homicide or physical injuries due to "reckless imprudence"—one possible charge mentioned by the Department of Justice in the case of the Ultra tragedy.

The above outcomes make me cynical that the inquiry into the Ultra incident would turn out to be different. I regret to say that I am not equal to

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila



the task of following all the convoluted theories advanced by a number of seemingly learned persons who have been invoking connections between the incident and the dynamics of mob psychology, "the damaged Filipino culture," and the responsibility of mass media—especially TV—in providing the public useful visual information other than mass entertainment, based on song and dance and corny ad libs and dialogue.

Sometimes one has to rest his mind from all the demands of going through complex explanations by those who appear to be learned. All I am interested in—and I suspect it is what the public wants—are simple results, like pinning direct responsibility for the sad episode so that the victims can be compensated and, more importantly, so that the tragedy will not be repeated, and making TV networks stop their cut-throat competition for ratings that forces them to cram crowds into virtual death traps.

It appears that in the course of blame-seeking, the tragedy has been seized by the government as an opportunity for setting political scores with ABS-CBN and used as an occasion by those holding strong political biases to grind their ideological and political axes.

There are a few straightforward facts that are being ignored in this frenzy to look for scapegoats. First, the venue of the ABS-CBN show can hold only 18,000 people and twice that number had gathered trying to get in. The overcrowding was a recipe for disaster. The potential for stampede was aggravated by the fact that the program

provided incentives for panic: raffle tickets that offered up to more than P1 million worth of prizes to be distributed to a few.

There was a stampede for those limited number of tickets. In that excited atmosphere, a little commotion could spark a stampede, even a riot. In a stampede, any expectation of orderly behavior is an idle wish. To trace the stampede to the disgusting Filipino behavior of jumping the queue is to exhibit flatulence. Blaming our "damaged culture" for some spontaneous outbreak of disorder is stretching theory too far. Please, let us leave our theorizing to academic seminars.

Gratuitous is the lame excuse of ABS-CBN program managers that it was only giving the crowd "what it wants" and that the lottery was a public service that gave "hope" to the poor to gain a windfall so they can "escape poverty." Impressionistic evidence suggests that most of the fans of the program don't go there for the contents. Many go there for the chance to hit the jackpot. The same incentive is offered by the lotto and sweepstakes.

Hope is not an original explanation. The great lover Casanova is credited for initiating the lottery. He sold the idea to the French king that lottery was a good way to bolster state revenues to finance wars. When asked by the skeptical king how it would work, Casanova said, "Hope, sir."

The finding of the investigation of the government task force that the crowd was "exploited, manipulated and treated like animals" does not explain the stampede. It was a conclusion prompted by self-defense that instantly shifted the blame to ABS-CBN, which has not always been friendly to the administration.

The flak was not slow in coming. There were those who immediately blamed the Arroyo administration for not doing enough to alleviate poverty. So, the poor had to die in the stampede for a chance to grab some windfalls.

The first lesson we learn from this stampede is that blame is interminable.

Romance at a certain age

FOR WOMEN OF A CERTAIN AGE, ROMANCE doesn't come like rain showers—frequent and unexpected—but rather like a stream in the desert: you have to look for it and when you find it, you have to make the most of it.

Just the other night, my husband and I were getting ready for bed and he started complaining about a bruise on his knee, wondering when and how he got it. I took a look at it and said: "It's just like the one I have," showing him a similar dark spot on my knee. "It comes from pressing our knees against our dining table," I explained. Our new table, if you must know, comes with benches instead of chairs, and we've both taken to putting our feet up whenever we eat, our knees pressed against the table for balance.

My husband took a look at my bruise and marveled: "Wow, didn't you know, we have the same spot in the same part of the body. I like that!"

It was the most romantic line I'd heard in ages. As you can guess by now, one's definition of romance evolves as one ages. I never thought so when I was younger, but you do arrive at the stage in life when the conventional expressions of romance—roses, chocolates, jewelry and serenades—actually seem sappy and cheesy, love expressed as clichés, uncreative and predictable. Nowadays, I much prefer simple, practical expressions of love, gestures and actions that don't necessarily come with Hallmark card sentiments, but are far more eloquent.

I MAY have thrown a surprise party for the hubby on his 50th birthday, but he topped that some years ago when I arrived from a month-long fellowship in the United States and found that he had secretly enlarged and renovated the master bath. We had talked about redoing our narrow and cramped bathroom for years, but I never thought that while I was away, he would spend his bonus money on a home improvement project.

He swore the kids to secrecy, and when I called a few days before my trip home, asking him what he wanted for *pasalubong*, he told me to bring home red bath towels. They turned out to be the finishing touch for our new bathroom, which he had furnished with a gleaming new

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



red bathtub. I walked into the house and was led directly to the master bath, and in the next few days, I would make every excuse to enter the bathroom, basking in my new, surprise gift.

My sisters and cousins in the States, hearing about the surprise that awaited me upon arrival, nearly swooned at the news. (Again, women our age swoon over bathroom renovations, not roses and champagne.) "Mabuti pa si Pie," they would sigh.

But my brother-in-law had a message for him: "Please tell Pie not to do something like that again, we're beginning to look bad to our wives!"

BUT our husbands can't renovate bathrooms every day or even every year, and as the years roll on, even just holding hands in public seems beneath your dignity. For women of a certain age, and a certain inclination, romance must then be sought for, grasped wherever and whenever they can find it.

For me and a widening circle of friends and family, romance comes by way of "Koreanovelas," the same serials that air over local channels but which we watch by way of DVD sets with English subtitles, to be followed at our own pace and at leisure.

Whenever my family starts ragging me about my current obsession over "Koreanovelas," I retort that each of us has our own obsessions but I never say anything about their fishing and saxophone playing, their iPod downloading and fan fiction writing. "I don't get on your case, so get off mine," I warn. "You should be thankful I don't go ballroom dancing and employ a dance instructor," I throw in, though I must say that I don't think there's necessarily anything wrong with hiring men to dance with you.

But I recently came upon a story that puts even my fascination with "Koreanovelas" and their "spoonie stars" (as a badly translated blurb puts it) to shame.

A READER who likewise follows Korean romantic serials says she exchanges e-mail with three US-based Filipinas, all of them members of a Singapore-based forum on Korean dramas and related topics.

Recently, she writes, "I was roused from my sleep by one of my friends" who wanted to know if she could help the friend find a taped copy of the soundtrack of the Koreanovela "Hotelier" (which just ended on Channel 11, by the way), starring Bae Yong Jun, a superstar of the Hallyu or Korean wave. The friend's mother, it turns out, had just passed away at the age of 92. Before her death, the old woman loved to watch Yonsama (as Bae is known by Japanese fans) in "Hotelier," and before she passed away had requested her family to play the drama's musical theme during her wake and burial.

"She had also told her daughter that she wanted to meet the character in that drama in her next life!" the reader writes. "My friend later told me that in the homily during her funeral, the priest also mentioned how the deceased loved the drama and the actor so much!"

And while she protests that she hasn't yet reached this level of fanaticism, the reader says she was able to find the soundtrack and send it to her frantic friend.

Which gives me an idea. I had initially toyed with asking my family to use the theme from the musical "Rent" for my funeral, but the old lady's request is tempting. Imagine going to meet your Maker with the romantic themes from your favorite serials floating in the air, images of the "spoonie" Yonsama escorting you to the Afterlife.

If our husbands had any good sense in them, they would take this as a broad hint. We may protest that romance no longer holds any practical attraction for us, but like finding a stream in the desert, when you find the waters, you want to jump in and refresh yourself. Even if only on the small screen.

A fencing party in Madrid

LA SOLIDARIDAD, THE NEWSPAPER (NOT THE famous bookstore on Padre Faura run by Frankie and Tessie Jose), is the last thing you will bring to the beach to read. The multi-volume, hard-cover, coated-paper, parallel language text edition is so heavy you cannot even read it comfortably in bed. You must sit up and use a table to consult it.

Since La Solidaridad has century-old news, it is usually read for research and out of patriotism rather than pleasure, which is unfortunate because it contains many little items of interest: poems, obituaries, notices, etc. We are all familiar with the political articles of Rizal, Del Pilar, Antonio Luna, etc., but what about the other articles?

Antonio Luna wrote a number of essays on life in Madrid that he later compiled in a small book "Impresiones." There are other forgotten stories like an account of a *despedida* for Juan Luna some time in June 1890 before he moved to Paris.

Marco Espada is the byline under the article, "Un asalto en el atelier Luna." It is probably a pseudonym, but it is obviously written by a swordsman or at least someone who understood the art of fencing. Espada described a fencing party in the Luna studio in Ventura de la Vega Street in Madrid and gave a list of those in attendance: Lorente, Ponce, Lete, Dinayuga, Puarc, Apacible and, of course, the Luna brothers, Juan and Antonio. Everyone was identified only by their surnames, which suggests that all the readers of La Solidaridad (it must have been very few) knew who they were. Espada noted that the Filipinos attended different fencing schools in Madrid—Sanz, Carbonell and Zuavo—and one could tell by the way they handled a sword what school they came from:

"The contests began with an exciting game between the Luna brothers. Although both are amateurs, they showed unusual poise and dexterity. The speed of attack and defense, the firmness of the stand, the withdrawal to the background po-

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



sition, everything took place with astounding rapidity. The fact that the two trained in different systems—Italian and French—made the contest very interesting. Juan Luna uses the Italian technique; Antonio Luna, whom we have already seen in different public contests and recently in the military school, uses the French system. We are not partial to one or the other; both are good and, in our humble opinion, a mixture of both systems might be better.

"In the Italian technique, the thrusts are made with force and the movements of the body are important. This tires the player. The French system with more firmness in the extensive attacks and in the rests is not so tiring. It is true that the changes in position and the low stab which are terrible are not found in the French system; but in the low thrusts, there is a disadvantage in the line which the foil traces. This is not straight and, therefore, not the shortest. With a straight attack and pass, we believe that there is a shorter line drawn by the foil. What we admire in the Italian system are the changes of position at every thrust of the opponent and the bend in preparation for the second thrust. These moves, executed well, produce astounding results and there is no possibility of being caught defenseless. Briefly, the Italian method is exciting, nervous, energetic, and needs agility; it tires the player. The French method on the other hand is restful, firm, secure, and does not tire the player and therefore can be used by everybody.

"We have written down these observations

about the fencing techniques now prevalent because of the contest between the Luna brothers which ended successfully. It was the best item in the program. Antonio Luna and Lorente later played an exciting game. The responses of Mr. Luna were direct and rapid; his thrusts and his salies showed his speed. Luna is a nervous player, energetic; Lorente, on the other hand, is a cold, poised and calculating player and a credit to his teacher Zuavo: he has firmness, he does not attack, he waits for the attacks, and then responds. He showed the makings of an excellent player. He is a fan of the game.

Lete and Juan Luna also played a game. It was an excellent contest wherein Mr. Luna was able to display his Italian thrusts to advantage and his moves which were very effective. Mr. Lete of the Circulo Militar is a student who, with the equalities he has and his interest in the art, can be a good player."

The above could very well have been written by our sports writers, but their task today is made simpler because fencing bouts are not only captured on video that can produce instant, slow-motion replays but the fencers are now wired with computerized equipment that shows hits, misses and the line of a foil.

At the outbreak of the Philippine Revolution in 1896, the Luna brothers opened a fencing school in their home on Calle Alix in Sampaloc, Manila, and we have photographs of them in action, teaching their students the French and Italian styles of fencing. In the Lopez Museum, we have some watercolor drawings by Luna showing the different fencing movements.

Fencing is a thing of the past, the weapon, unlike a gun, a sign of a more polite and civilized age.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Sexuality

I SPENT PART OF VALENTINE'S DAY CORRECTING MID-term exams, but it wasn't that bad, considering that the exams were for a Soc Sci 3 course, "Exploring Gender and Sexuality."

That's a new general education course open to all undergraduates. It was the product of almost four years of planning, involving people from different fields: the social sciences, medicine, communications. I had to shepherd the course proposal through UP's bureaucratic maze for over a year and a half, and then organize workshops, including one with Catholic and Muslim theologians, to fine-tune the course with the teaching staff.

But, some of you might be asking: Do we need a "sex course"? Aren't we already saturated with enough "sex talk" in the mass media? Sex is all around, from the idiot box at home to the towering billboards along main thoroughfares.

Yet, it is precisely because of this massive assault that I think we need something like the Soc Sci 3 course, especially when you see how, as the mass media become more sex-saturated, people seem to end up knowing less about sex.

Dangerous myths

To make my point, I thought it would be worthwhile sharing some of the stuff coming out of the exams, misconceptions that seem incongruous with this age of information. Mind you, some of the students are juniors and seniors.

There were students who still believe menstruation expels "dirty blood." One student said menstruation was there to "get rid of eggs." Another wrote that menstruation "rids the female's body of her 'old' egg cell that was not fermented."

On family planning, there were students who still cited "rhythm" as a reliable method. On the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, several said condoms don't work because they have holes through which viruses can pass.

I could say that these misconceptions are to be expected from innocent young students, but I suspect many of those myths are actually quite widely held among older adults as well, who in fact teach young people these myths. I worry because these myths can be dangerous, putting young people at risk for unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

How does Soc Sci 3 respond to these problems? As I told the students on the first class, the course is not a sex education class, at least not in the traditional sense. We've learned from the mistakes of population education classes in high school, boring classes with boring teachers (themselves often scared to death by the prospect of talking about sex) and boring visual aids that make the reproductive organs look like aliens from outer space.

We've learned, too, that the last thing we needed was a moralistic course that preached about sex as sin. The idea of menstrual blood as dirty tells us, too, about how we look at women as "dirty," even polluting (many religions still forbid menstruating women from entering religious places). I have also noticed how students and their older relatives use words like "committing" sex, which betrays a general view of sex as dangerous and sinful.

We've also been conscious about the need to drop another type of moralism that sometimes emerges with gender courses, which do exist in UP and many other Philippine universities. Although well-meaning, with the intention of raising students' consciousness about women's oppression, these courses run the risk of promoting another kind of moralism with its focus on problems such as sex trafficking and violence against women, and a tendency toward male-bashing. One teacher in Mindanao handling a gender course told me recently that she was gently chided by superiors because she had asked students to look at "sexy songs." That, they told her, was not something to be discussed in a gender course!

Beyond sex

The needs are tremendous, and we need to respond by relating sex and gender to sexuality, and how it permeates our lives. We do this by weaving the discussions about sex and sexuality into the human development cycle, from fetal life to old age. That includes talk about biomedical aspects, but in a way that helps students to understand the changes going on in their own bodies, from their libidos to pimples, from their menopausal mothers' mood swings to lolo's mellowing.

The sessions on reproductive biology inevitably bring us to family planning, and here I am amazed at the knowledge gaps. What strikes me, in particular, is the lack of awareness of natural family planning and its difference from rhythm or the calendar method. I'm realizing, too, that many young people use the calendar method to prevent pregnancies.

We talk too about psychosocial development, including reminders that sexuality comes into our lives quite early, whether we're prepared or not. During one lecture, I noticed how the class suddenly fell silent, really silent, as I talked about how we need to prevent sexual abuse of children, with a warning that the perpetrators are most often people the child already knows and trusts, including relatives. "Teach your children," I told them in no uncertain terms, "that no one, absolutely no one, has the right to touch their bodies without their permission, and that this is done only in certain contexts, like help with a bath."

Healthy and moral

The course is strong on gender, but in an applied way, bringing in culture, politics, history. We talk, for example, about how society demands female virginity, and go back in history to explain how this is tied to the way societies evolved (this is much too long for a column so I won't go into details). But after the historical review, students begin to understand why such demands are made. It's then easier to tell the students it's fine if women want to keep their virginity for their husbands, but that they should see their own worth as being more than a virgin. I do this for a very practical reason: several faculty members have noted how young girls sometimes "lose" (I explain that the term "lose" is itself loaded) their virginity to a smooth-talking boyfriend who declares his love (perhaps on Valentine's) and then think they're ruined for life. The result is that they then move from one boyfriend to another, thinking they're no longer worthy of anyone's "love" and "respect."

There's a lot of room for bringing in values and ethics, how we can be moral without being moralistic, as we challenge students to imagine a world where we can feel good, and healthy about sex and sexuality, about ourselves and about those around us, where "boy" and "girl" talk can go beyond empty bragging about being the most beautiful, the most sexy, the most appealing, the best performer.

In the end, our faculty team hopes to give young people the tools for discernment to be able to see through the sweet talk of their boyfriends or girlfriends, the glamour and glitter of media celebrities and advertising, the rhetoric of politicians and religious leaders, so they can make informed decisions about sexuality and life.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan



Urgent need to reorganize Philippine tourism industry

CERTAIN PERSONS CLAIMING TO speak on behalf of the tourism industry have been criticizing Senate Bill No. 2138, the Tourism Act of 2005. (PDI, 2/7/06)

It is alleged that there's no need to reorganize the tourism sector of the country. But what are the hard facts? Every single tourist brings in almost \$1,000. Thailand and Malaysia receive 12 to 15 million visitors a year, generating up to \$15 billion for their economies. Should we remain content with a target of 3 million arrivals and \$3 billion for 2006 while we panic in paying our foreign debt and stabilizing the peso?

Even if our tourism grew by 20 percent in 2004, this is still behind Asia-Pacific's 27 percent growth rate—it is as irrelevant as our economy growing at 4 percent or 5 percent when our neighbors' are growing at 8 percent. Even with that growth, our hotels are fully booked and are charging very high prices because of intense demand.

In the last two decades, Thailand, Malaysia and other coun-

tries reorganized their tourism sectors. Today, they reap the benefits of that reorganization. Our proposals follow some of the reforms and seek to do even more. We must regulate to offer a quality of service that is globally competitive. We must have a promotions effort that is well-funded and truly makes the world know the beauty of our country. We have to develop quality tourism zones quickly so that we can accommodate more and more tourists while preserving our forests, beaches and historical sites. We need to aim for 10 million tourists in 10 years.

On these and other core reforms, there is broad consensus within the industry. All the major players in the industry, particularly those responsible for inbound tourist traffic, were invited to and participated in our committee hearings and technical working group meetings. (There were 14 such hearings and meetings conducted by the Senate tourism committee over the course of a year and a half.) To this day, they continue to work with us in refin-

ing and polishing this bill. Indeed, we brought it to the floor of the Senate precisely to emphasize its urgency and to concretize the points of debate.

I can confidently say that only a few points of contention remain. But I am more concerned with the irresponsibility of certain people who speak out against the bill, utterly ignoring all the checks and balances that are built into it.

This is the first time that a national policy for tourism is even being seriously discussed in the halls of Congress. We are 10 years behind the global boom of tourism. Now is not the time to go back to committee level, because this bill should have become law 10 years ago.

We emphasize that where tourism advances, poverty retreats. Those who seek to impede its advance do nothing to solve the problem of poverty.

—SEN. RICHARD J. GORDON, Room 509, 5/F Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Bldg., Financial Center, Pasay City

LETTERS

No bad news if not for GMA

THIS IS REGARDING THE LETTER of Elaine Sarmiento. (PDI, 1/31/06) It's true that there are lots of good things happening in our country today, but there are plenty of bad stories, too, for which reason we, Filipinos, should stay ever vigilant. We should thank the people who are ready to risk their lives just to keep the public informed of what the greedy and immoral politicians are doing.

She said that "her" President is trying her best amid all the political bickerings? Trying her best to do what? To stay glued to her stolen throne, that is.

Is she saying that the bishops and the likes of former Sen. Jovito Salonga and all the people asking for the truth, people deprived of their rights, are chauvinists? Let me say that all the bickerings are of her own making. There wouldn't be any if Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo hadn't suppressed the truth by barring her minions from telling the Filipino people the truth behind the Hello Garci scandal. There is no one to blame for all our troubles now other than Sarmiento's President. She is the one who started the confusion we're in now.

We Filipinos are peace-loving people. Edsa I proved this. But how can we have peace when there is no justice, when our hearts are bleeding, when our pride has been shattered, and our stomachs are burning with hunger?

Peace be with Sarmiento!

—REYNALDO TAHUM, tahumreynaldo@yahoo.com

Yes, zero-waste mining is possible

ZERO-WASTE MINING IS EXACTLY what it connotes—mining without waste, and yes, it can be done.

Mine wastes, or mine tailings, are the leftover minerals thrown away after the sought-after metals have been retrieved from the crushed ore. These mine tailings, which in the majority of cases contain cyanide, possess a vast potential to devastate the environment. If we put to good use the mine tailings produced in mining operations, destructive mine spills will be a thing of the past.

Mine tailings are nothing but pure sand—a very valuable construction raw material. By simply adding the right amount of cement and coarse aggregates, which abound in any mining site, hundreds of pre-fabricated concrete products—from simple pavement tiles to concrete bridges—can be manufactured. The possibilities are endless, limited only by one's imagination.

Even cyanide can be recycled, or to be more technically precise, regenerated. Through a process called AVR (acidification volatilization-regeneration), cyanide in waste water can be transformed into its gaseous state and recovered as concentrated cyanide solution, which can be used again and again in the metals recovery process. The cost of cyanide is the single biggest expense in gold processing, and its recovery and re-use make a lot of sense for mining operators and for the environment as well.

At the end of milling operations, when cyanide solutions have to be finally discarded, the solutions must first be detoxified. Cyanide can be destroyed by treating the wastewater with small amounts of hydrogen peroxide, sulfur dioxide, ferrous sulphate or calcium hypochlorite—all very common reagents available everywhere (mercury is no longer used in large mining operations).

Zero-waste mining could cost mining operators a few hundred thousand dollars, but this cost can be more than offset by the elimination of the tailings dam, the mere construction and maintenance of which could run into millions of dollars. In addition, tailings dams are prone to accidental ruptures which could cause environmental damage of horrific proportions.

Mining does not necessarily destroy the environment. Mining can help conserve the environment by providing the government and the people the wherewithal to do so. The wealthiest nations in the world are the ones who learned to make intelligent use of their natural resources while simultaneously protecting the environment with equal vigor and determination.

—ROD PADRIGON, mining engineer, rod_padrigon@yahoo.com

Focus anti-poverty on poorest regions

IN ADDITION TO LEW EDWARDS' proposal as to where officials of the Arroyo administration can find the poor (PDI, 1/23/06), Foodfirst Information and Action Network (Fian) Philippines is also recommending that the P35 billion anti-poverty fund that has been set aside by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo be spent in regions where there is a high incidence of poverty.

The worst-placed among these regions (out of the country's 17) are: Region 13 (Caraga), 54.2 percent; ARMM, 53.1 percent; Region 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula),

49.4 percent; Region 5 (Bicol), 48.4 percent; and Region 4-B (Mimaropa), 47.9 percent. (2nd Philippine Report on the Millennium Development Goals)

If the government is serious in making a difference in the lives of the poor, then it should focus on these areas. These areas might not be vote-rich or they might not have delivered big votes for GMA, but they are areas where hunger is really massive. The government should also prioritize projects that provide not only jobs but also long-term benefits to the communities.

It should avoid job-generating activities that are very short-term, like street cleaning.

It can concentrate on building classrooms, dikes, irrigation canals, among other things. This will enable the people working in these projects to have money to buy food. Besides, the projects are relevant to the needs of the villages.

—RAFFY REY HIPOLITO, policy advocacy officer, Foodfirst Information and Action Network (Fian) Philippines, 9-B Matulungin St., Barangay Central, QC

Politics not for Pacman

I HOPE THE POLITICIANS WILL not use the victory of Manny Pacquiao for their political ends, and I further hope that Pacquiao will not enter politics like Robert Jaworski, Freddie Webb, etc.

Politics is the science of good government. If he insists on going into politics, he must take up political science first.

—LT. COL. JULIAN MALONSO, PA (ret), 92 New York St., Cubao, Quezon City

For mining but ...

I WOULD LIKE TO REACT TO THE ARTICLE "Mining Act revisited" which appeared in the Talk of the Town section. (PDI, 2/5/06)

Benjamin Philip Romualdez and Jovito Sarmiento argued for the "benefits of mining" in the country. While it is true that mining uplifts economies, they are wrong in saying that the kind of mining industry we have in the Philippines will propel our economy toward progress.

We have had many mining companies in the past that advanced the same argument. But where are we now? Have we progressed? Have come up with industries that mining could have spun out? Have the minerals they extracted in Northern Luzon, specifically in Benguet, helped improve the lives of the people there?

The truth is, people in Northern Luzon continue to wallow in poverty. And those that once feasted on their resources are now gone.

I am not opposed to mining. I believe that it provides the necessary metals and minerals that we need in developing our industries. What I oppose is the fact that our country is not really benefiting from it.

First of all, the metals and minerals extracted here are brought in their raw state to the mother countries of mining companies. Secondly, mining does not really generate stable jobs. The jobs that mining generates are temporary, only good while the mining operations last.

We can only say that mining generates real employment if the industries that are supposed to spin out of mining, like automobile, jewelry, ship building, telecommunications, chemicals and the like spring up here. Are we producing automobiles here? Do we really have an airplane factory here?

The reality is, foreign mining firms serve as agents of their governments to get the minerals and resources they need for their own development and consumption. Foreign mining firms are here because they no longer have the mineral resources they need.

If they really want to help us develop, they should also build metal processing industries here.

But no, they want us to remain backward and dependent on their technologies because they want us to remain a source of profit. They take our mineral resources at very low costs, process them in their countries and then sell the finished products to us at much higher prices.

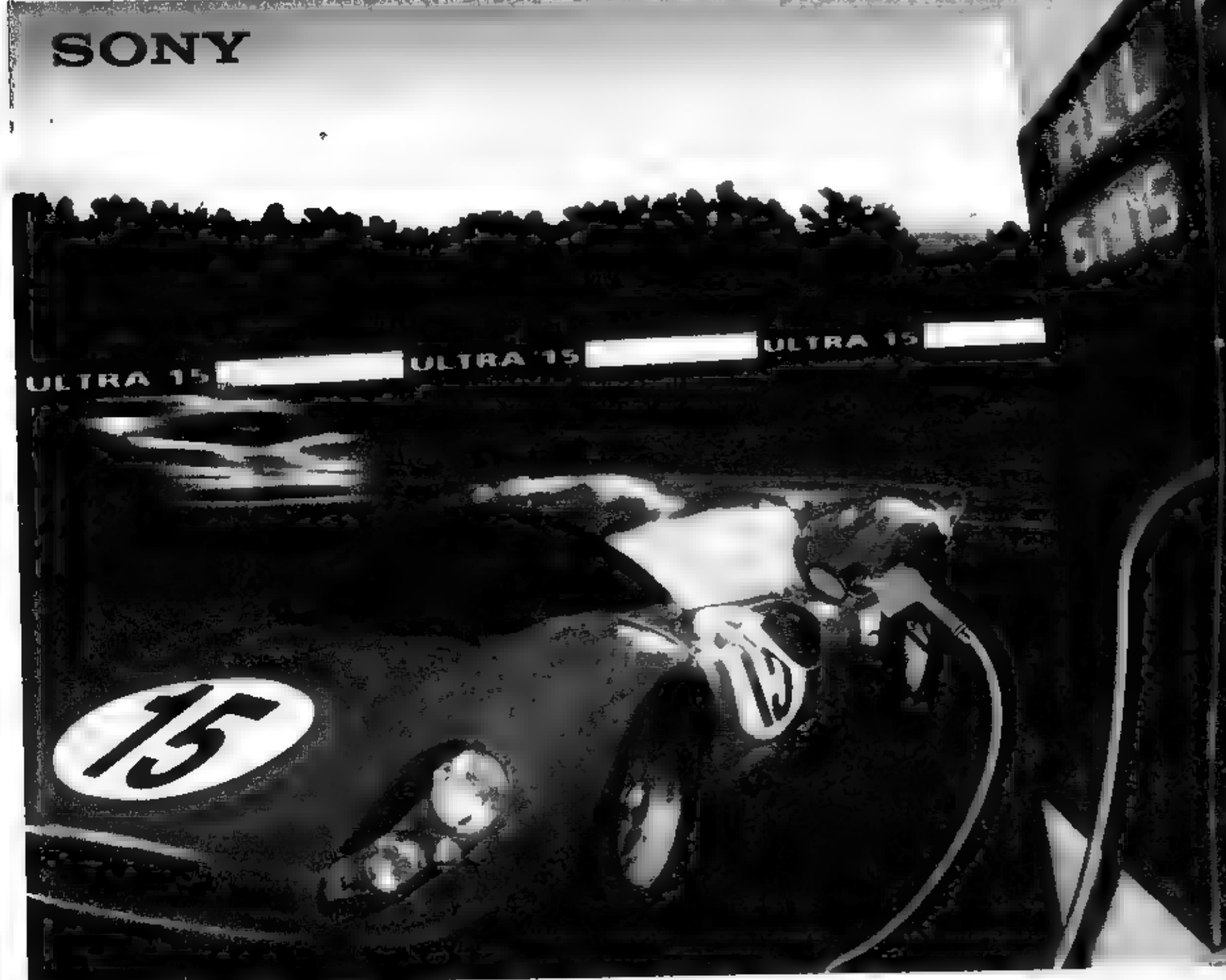
If we really want to develop and progress, let's not give our mineral resources to foreigners. What the government should do first is to support and help finance Filipino mining companies because no businessman would want our country to develop more than a countryman.

Second, support and encourage other Filipino businessmen to invest in industries that process mineral resources into finished products.

Third, help the retailers of these finished products by protecting the market against the flooding of the same products from other countries, and by vigorously campaigning to get our countrymen to buy our own products.

Thus way, we will achieve genuine progress and development.

—EDMUNDO R. BACATAN, 153 Scout Rallos Ext., Kamuning, Quezon City



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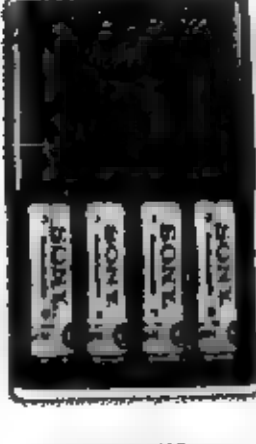
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INQUIRER

Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandyayel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Indigenous peoples slam bio-prospecting



"COCA-COLA Time" by Ruel Bimuyag

By Maurice Malanes
in Granada, Spain

THE GENE TECHNOLOGY, WHICH THE INDUSTRIALIZED world sees as the "wave of the future," may be something new. But for many indigenous and local peoples from five continents, who were in Granada, Spain, recently to help shape an international system on access to and benefit-sharing from biodiversity resources, it is just a new, sophisticated tool of the more powerful countries to replay old colonial ways of appropriating the resources of weaker countries.

"Through bio-prospecting, if not outright bio-piracy, proponents of the gene technology have been setting their eyes on our resources," Datu Victorino Saway of the indigenous Talaandig in Bukidnon told the INQUIRER.

"This (bio-prospecting) is all about exploiting resources as has been the case since the colonial era," he said.

Bio-prospecting is the exploration, extraction and screening of biological diversity for commercially valuable and biochemical resources

such as medicines or a certain gene.

Saway was among indigenous and local folk from Asia, the Pacific, Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe who gathered in Granada on Jan. 30-Feb. 3 as one voice through the United Nations-accredited International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity.

They came to help intervene in the fourth meeting of the working group on access and benefit-sharing of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

INDIGENOUS/A19

Documenting disappearing rituals of the Cordillera

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

THEIR CONSTANT COMPANIONSHIP and commitment to documenting the rituals and disappearing traditions of the Cordillera have made many tribals mistake photographers Tommy Hafalla, 48, and Ruel Bimuyag, 26, as a father-and-son team.

In their two-person show "Hulin" at the Victor Oteyza Community Art Space on the top floor of La Azotea Building on Session Road in Baguio City, ongoing until Feb. 28, Hafalla and Bimuyag refer to an Ifugao ritual performed to drive away rat pestilence of rice and illnesses in the community.

When a hulin is performed, Hafalla said, the men of the tribe look for a narra tree in the mountains and cut off its branches to make a bulul or hugo, the highest form representing hardship. Hafalla translated a hugo into "pain buddy" used for healing.

At the exhibit opening on Jan. 28, a mumbaki (native priest) chanted in Ifugao to support the photographers in their job of documenting the Cordillera culture so that it may not be misrepresented. The photos are mostly about rituals.

Outstanding rushes

The two photographers met in Hapao, Ifugao when Hafalla was working as cameraman for Kidlat de Guia's film for Discovery Channel. De Guia's film focused on his father Kidlat Tatumik's mission of giving video workshops to residents of the province. Bimuyag was part of the workshop.

Hafalla said Bimuyag's video shots were different from the rest. His rushes and frames stood out. The older photographer learned that Bimuyag, an outdoors man, had been shooting also with a still camera and was keen on the medium.

Hafalla was just too willing to share whatever he knew with the young man who turned out to be knowledgeable about the culture not only of the Ifugao but also of the Mt. Province, Benguet and Kalinga since he has mastered playing their music. He can play the gongs and bamboo instruments like the ungruyong, paw-paw, paklong, buklong, potang-og, tongatong and takitak—all indicators of the richness of the highland culture.

'It has a soul'

Hafalla gave Bimuyag a roll of black and white film while they were attending a begnas (a community rice ritual) in Sagada. Bimuyag discovered that black and white had "more value. It has a soul." He was hooked.

When Bimuyag, a tourism graduate of the University of Baguio who left a stable job at a travel agency to be a full-time photographer and choreographer of cultural performances, had his first solo show, Hafalla allowed him to use his dark room. Now Bimuyag has his own.

Sometimes, they would cover the same event together like the siday, a community healing in Sagada. Only selected people could attend this ritual, and the two felt honored to join the tribals in trying to appease spirits guarding the community.

Their siday series took place last year when there were a lot of people being felled by strokes and one house was deliberately burned down when spirits possessed the owner.

Bimuyag's touch of wit could be seen in "Coca Cola Time" which showed tribal leaders in a moment of respite, passing a bottle of Coke Liro.

The men had just finished a 15-km walk called the libor within the perimeter of Sagada. At the final station, a sacrificial pig was killed, and the villagers donated food to the leaders, a social obligation called the tambo. Among the donated items was a bottle of Coke.

In his other photo "Rain Dance," Bimuyag showed rain pouring on the day of the begnas. While the men were gathered around the bonfire in the dap-ay (gathering place for elders), the women, holding up their umbrellas, began to dance and beat the gongs to feel warm.

Bimuyag heard a shout of blessing in the middle of the dance to mean that it was acceptable for the women to play the gongs.

LES REYES
ENTREPRENEUR

Paano nga ba magtayo at magpalago ng
NEGOSYO

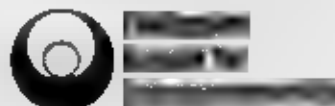
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"Sana may Go Negosyo Entrepreneurship Summit at Expo na noong nag-uumpisa pa lang ako mag-negosyo. Baka hindi na sana ako papalit-palit ng negosyo. Kahit kasi medyo kumikita ang mga negosyong itinayo ko, parang parating kulang pa rin. Buti na lang noong itinayo ko ang Reyes Haircutters nasagap ko ang konsepto ng franchising! Matibay sa magandang quality, supit sa mababang halaga na handog namin sa mga customers, maliliit lang na kapital ang kailangan para makapag-franchise at malaki ang chances para magtagumpay! Noong una 20 nga lang ang pangarap kong branches pero ngayon may 200 branches na kami."

Kaya halina kayol Alamin ang advantages ng franchising. Huwag palampasin ang pagkakataon na matuto, magtayo at paunlarin ang inyong sariling negosyo. Punta na sa Go Negosyo Entrepreneurship Summit at Expo!

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Entrepreneurship Expo February 24-25, 2006 • Market! Market! Trade Halls A & B, Fort, Taguig

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DAY 1 (February 23, 2006/ 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

PCE Recognition of Outstanding Entrepreneurship Teachers / Students / Programs by PCE
• FORUM 1: Building National Confidence and Optimism To Inspire More Successful Filipino Entrepreneurs - Moderators: Rico Hizon & Anna Marie Periquet. Panelists: Socorro Ramos, Hon. Jose Concepcion III, Dr. Rolando Hortalaza, Atty. Felipe Gozon, Vivienne Tan, Henry Lim Bon Liong, Rodrigo Rivera, Marid Prieto, Grace Glory Go • LUNCH BREAK TOPIC: Feng Shui Master Charlie Chao's Business Outlook • FORUM 2: A Global Market Beckons The Filipino Entrepreneur - Panelists: Dennis Mendiala, Dr. Poco Sandejas, Guillermo Luchangco, Ben Colayco, Menardo Jimenez Jr. • FORUM 3: Uncommon Heroes for the Common Good Panelists: Dr. Justin Arbolada, Francisco Colayco, Ray Gapuz Jr., Rina Lopez-Bautista, Dylan Wilk, Gerry Germinor • Breeding The Entrepreneurial Mindset and Culture By Raju Manohyan • FORUM 4: New Approaches in Entrepreneurship Education • CULMINATING FORUM: Triggering the Age of Entrepreneurship in the Philippines. Panelists: Sec. Arthur Yap, Sec. Estrella Alabastro, Chairman Carlos Puno, OIC/Secretary Fe Hidalgo, Undersecretary Zorayda Amelia Aonzo, Executive Director Godelina Amata, Gov. Luis Raymund F. Villafuerte, Linda Wirth, Johnnie Koo, Prof. Josephine Aguilar

DAY 2 (February 24, 2006/ 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)

Opening Ceremonies Cutting of Ribbon: VP Noli de Castro, Sen. Manuel Villar, Sen. Manuel Roxas II, Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., Sen. Francis Pangilinan, Cong. Wilhelmino Alvarado, Mayor Rosendo Capco, Mayor Freddie Tinga, Government Officials, Partner Organizations • International Workshop on Technopreneurship - Conducted by Prof. Patrick Chan • MOST DOST • Business Plan Competition Brief: PCE/PESO, CFBC, ENEDA, JCI, HSBC, TIES, ONIA, GEN-P • Easy Tips on How to Start a Retail Business and How to Supply to Retailers - By Steven T. Cua • "Elevator Pitch" Exhibition by Business Plan Contest Winners & Runners-up • Funding Options for Outstanding Business Plans • Easy on the pocket Business Ideas By Food Cart Association of the Philippines • Awarding of PCE-ENEDA Cup Winners • GO NEGOSYO Concert with Orange and Lemons at the Central Plaza, Market! Market!

DAY 3 (February 25, 2006/ 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)

The Franchise Boom: Now is the Time to Get Started By: Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc. • International Workshop on Technopreneurship - Conducted by: Prof. Patrick Chan • MOST DOST - Franchise Your Business An Option for Growth - By: Philippine Franchise Association • The Entrepreneur: Know Yourself - By: Lex Ledesma • Finding Your Opportunity of a Lifetime: Where do Entrepreneurs Get Their Ideas - By: Jay Bernardo • Moving Innovations to Market - By: Maol Arroyo • The Essentials of a Successful Business Start-up - By: Joel Santos • FORUM: Financing Programs that Work - Moderator: Mau Boante • Panelists: National Livelihood Support Fund, Personal Bank Loan providers, ABS-CBN Bayan Microfinance Foundation, Pawnshops, Cooperatives • Safeguarding and Optimizing Your Intellectual Capital - By: Intellectual Property Office

*Final list of speakers for confirmation

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Across the NATION E-mail: provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

GMA OKs P128-B Cagayan flood control

TUGUEGARAO CITY—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has approved a 25-year master plan proposed by Cagayan Valley officials to control floods in the region.

international Cooperation had been offering loans due to the government's prompt repayment.

low-lying villages of Cagayan. Tobacco farms in some parts of the Ilocos region were also reported to have suffered at least P100 million in losses as a result of recent rains and typhoons.

Senate, House to probe Semirara spill

By T.J. Burgonio A PANEL OF THE SENATE AND the House of Representatives is flying to Semirara Island in Antique on Saturday to look into the extent of the damage of the massive oil spill off the coast of the island, Sen. Pia Cayetano said yesterday.

WHAT LIES FOR MAN-GROVES? A 2002 study on the impact of oil contamination on mangroves by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States said mangroves are highly susceptible to oil exposure.

Floods, rains force evacuation of 4,000 from 15 Leyte villages

By Jani Arnaiz and Jhunnex Napallacan PDI Visayas Bureau

SAN FRANCISCO, SOUTHERN Leyte—More than 4,000 people have been living in evacuation centers here after floods spawned by non-stop rains hit 15 villages in San Francisco on Panaon Island, Southern Leyte.

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. INVITATION TO BID

PROVINCE OF CEBU BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE-GOODS AND SERVICES INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Republic of the Philippines QUIRINO STATE COLLEGE INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Forms for Cha-cha sign bid unavailable to LGUs

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2006

Across the **NATION**

A16

Court seeks custody of nursing exam results

By Carla R. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—A REGIONAL Trial Court judge in Iloilo on Monday ordered the Professional Regulation Commission and the Board of Nursing to place the board examination papers and answer sheets of 146 West Negros College (WNC) nursing graduates in court custody.

Judge Guillelmo Delin-Lim of RTC Branch 22 acted on a motion filed by nursing graduates who sued the PRC and the nursing

board for the release of their exam results.

The Iloilo sheriff is scheduled to go to Manila to get the test papers and answer sheets from the PRC office, according to Nelia Gonzales, lawyer for the WNC nursing graduates and one of the petitioners.

The judge also directed the commission and the board to furnish the petitioners a certified copy of the report of PRC Regional Director Lily Ann Baldago, who recommended that the results of the petition-

ers' examinations be withheld.

WNC graduate Johnny Albarico and 45 others have also filed a petition before the Court of Appeals to compel the PRC and the board to release the examination results.

Another petition, filed by 127 other WNC nursing graduates, is also pending in the sala of Bacolod RTC Judge Philade Agravador, lawyer Leon Moya said.

The court is awaiting the reply of the PRC and the board to the petition, he added.

Capiz Rep. Predenil Castro, in a privilege speech at the House of Representatives on Monday, scored Baldago for withholding the board exam results of the WNC graduates.

"It is truly lamentable to realize how the PRC, the Board of Nursing, and even the CHED (Commission on Higher Education) become powerless as they all crouch before the vagaries of Lily Ann Baldago," he said.

The PRC and the board promised to expeditiously investigate the matter involving the withholding of the examination results of the 567 graduates of the WNC, as well as the alleged "academic overloading," but until now no results have been presented, he said.

"In the meantime, the 567 poor and unfortunate nursing graduates of West Negros College remain clueless as to their future while their and their families' lives are suspended and continue to hang on the air of uncertainty," he added.

One of the graduates comes from Alkan, three are from Antique, four from Bohol, eight from Capiz, 35 from Cebu, 28 from Dumaguete, 122 from Iloilo, 320 from Negros Occidental, and one from Southern Leyte he said.

Castro called on Congress to investigate the case of the WNC nursing graduates.

He also urged the House to scrutinize "with its eagle eye," the budget of the PRC, the Board of Nursing, and the CHED.

ROUNDUP

2 village officials shot dead

DAVAO CITY—Communist rebels stormed a village in New Corella, Davao del Norte and executed two village officials, the military said Thursday. Jose Ma. Cuervo, military spokesperson for Southern Mindanao, said an undetermined number of New People's Army rebels arrived in Barangay El Salvador at about 6:30 a.m. Wednesday and seized barangay chair Loreto Cabuga, who was forced to lead the rebels to the houses of Councilors Bartolome Cabuga and Raul Jaton. The two were executed on suspicion that they were behind the organization of an anti-communist vigilante group.

Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

2 nabbed for marijuana

COTABATO CITY—Police arrested two suspected pushers on Monday while they were repacking marijuana inside a house on Pansacala Street here. Senior nsp. Samson Obatay, chief of the city police's special operations group, identified the suspects as Anwar Samparado and Soaman Ombol of Barangay Rosary Heights. Seized from them were five sachets of dried marijuana, drug paraphernalia and cash.

Charlie Sefiase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Ex-bank employee shot dead

COTABATO CITY—A former employee of a MetroBank branch here was shot dead by suspected car thieves after the victim refused to let go of his newly acquired motorcycle on Monday night, police said Tuesday. Senior nsp. Samson Obatay, chief of the city police's special operations group, said Wanesa Arsa, 32, a former Metro Bank clearing officer, was shot along Gonzalo Javier Street in Barangay Rosary Heights.

Charlie Sefiase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Laguna rural bank robbed

TANAUAN CITY—Four unidentified men ransacked a rural bank in Sta. Rosa City in Laguna on Feb. 9 and took away P500,000 in cash. Sta. Rosa police chief Supt. Florendo Salgado said the robbers, who pretended to be clients, went inside the Cabuyao Rural Bank in Barangay Balibago at 2:10 p.m. Shortly after, they announced a hold-up and disarmed the bank's lone security guard. They locked up the four bank employees and the guard inside the cash vault. The robbers escaped in a tricycle.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Artists' show in Legazpi

LEGAZPI CITY—The city government through the Commission on Biko History and Culture, on Monday launched a four-member show titled "Langis, Tita at Bato" and a book launch by Bicolano writers. A one-stop shop for new books on "Biko and/or Biko" writers was also set up at the Legazpi City Museum at the City Hall compound. The art exhibit, which will run until March 10, features the works of four Bicolanos in celebration of National Arts month.

PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



VALENTINE'S GIFT
It's a perfect Valentine's Day affair for 135 couples who wed by the beach in Hundred Islands, Alaminos City in rites officiated by the city's mayor, Hernani Braganza.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Chlorine sent to flooded Surigao towns

By Bert Pacate
PDI Mindanao Bureau

TANDAG, SURIGAO DEL SUR—The provincial health office has ordered the distribution of chlorine to various town centers in the province to combat water contamination caused by recent floods.

Dr. Cesar Paganan, provincial

health officer, said some residents had fallen ill after using contaminated water.

Records from the Adela Ty Memorial Medical Center showed that at least 50 people had already been treated for gastroenteritis and other waterborne diseases since the floods hit the province last week.

"Hundreds more may have

gotten sick due to contaminated waters. But we have little way of finding out. They could not go to health centers and hospitals because roads and bridges are not accessible," Paganan said.

Gov. Vicente Pimentel Jr. asked Defense Secretary Avellano Cruz Jr. for immediate assistance.

Jobseekers lose P6M in Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—ILLEGAL RECRUITERS in Mindanao collected nearly P6 million from unsuspecting victims last year, the Philippine Overseas Employment Office (POEA) in Mindanao said on Monday.

Francis Domingo, chief of the POEA-Mindanao, said the figure showed that people were still being lured by illegal recruiters to non-existent jobs abroad.

Domingo attributed the situation to the victims' failure to cooperate with the POEA.

He said illegal recruiters normally offered lucrative job placements to countries seeking Filipino workers. He did not identify the countries.

"All the efforts of the POEA to fight illegal recruitment will go to naught if Filipino overseas applicants do not cooperate," Domingo said.

On the bright side, he said, the number of victims declined last year.

In 2004, illegal recruiters collected nearly P4 million from 463 victims, he said. But last year, the number dropped to 411.

Domingo said the number of illegal recruitment cases also dropped to 136 in 2005 from 148 in 2004.

Most of the cases were settled out of court, he said.

"Also, some of the cases did not prosper because the victims were threatened," Domingo said. Judy Quiros, PDI Mindanao Bureau



PUERTO PRINCESA City celebrates Valentine's Day the environmental way as Mayor Edward Hagedorn leads city residents in tree planting ceremonies held annually every Feb. 14.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Indigenous peoples ...

From page A17

Some 450 participants from governments, UN agencies, indigenous and local community groups, the academe and industry attended.

Born out of the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in Brazil, the convention, which has 188 parties, aims "to promote the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources."

Some countries, like the Philippines, instituted in recent years some bio-prospecting agreements to help regulate bio-prospecting.

Bio-piracy

But with the lack of public information and awareness about bio-prospecting, many source communities and countries cannot effectively monitor or enforce bio-prospecting regulations, if any, leading to bio-piracy or the outright theft of biodiversity resources, said the Canada-based Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration.

The industrialized world has the edge in gene technology, but it doesn't have the raw materials, much of which still abound in developing or least developed countries.

While states are seeking to establish an international system to regulate and govern access to and equitable benefit-sharing from genetic resources, cases of bio-prospecting and bio-piracy, mostly in indigenous and local communities, continue.

Saway, for example, cited the case of government researchers in 1995 who "intruded" into the Talaandig community to gather plant specimens without getting the consent of the community.

Fortunately, says Saway, the people have a customary protocol penalizing those who encroach into the community without the permission of elders.

As punishment, the government researchers were told to provide the community with eight carabaos, 26 chickens, eight square meters each of red, white and black cloths, and P150 in coins.

"[It] was actually the Talaandig people's way of asserting their right to self-rule," Saway said.

Other indigenous peoples have presented cases of bio-piracy by pharmaceutical firms allied with universities or governments, which targeted medicinal plants, including certain animals, whose traditional uses have long been part of indigenous folk knowledge.

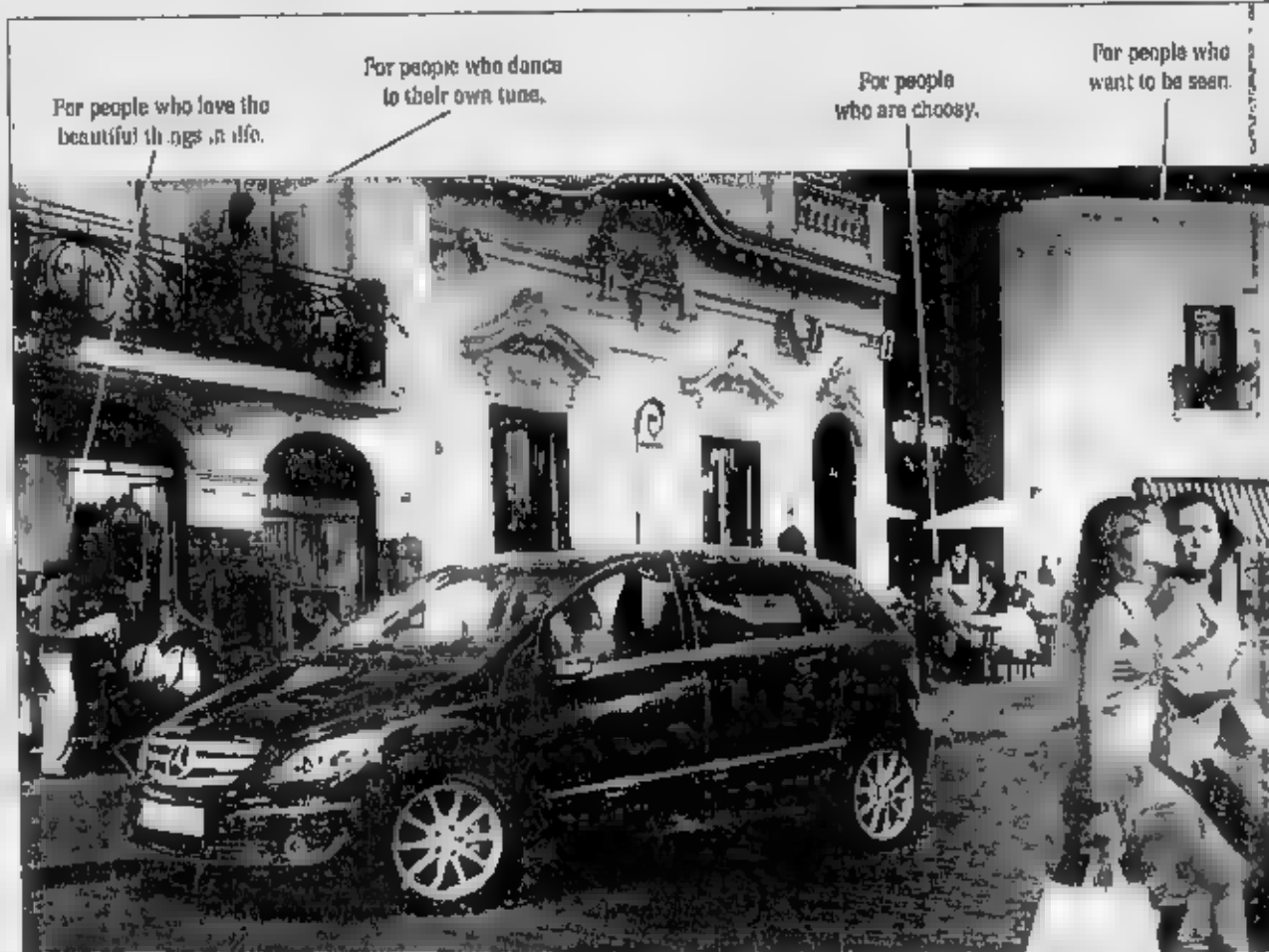
Indigenous and local communities from various countries have thus pushed for an international system that will guarantee respect for their rights to their territories and resources.

Igorot leader Lourdes Amos of the Thailand-based Asian Indigenous Peoples' Pact stressed on the first day of the meeting a "rights-based" system.

Reading an IPB statement, Amos said any international system must respect and recognize indigenous peoples' "rights to self-determination and their corresponding right of permanent sovereignty over our lands and natural resources."

Amos said the right to "free and prior informed consent" and "the right to say no or deny access to our knowledge and resources" are subsumed in the indigenous peoples' right to self-determination.

MAURICE Malanes, a native of Kibungan, Benguet and PDI correspondent for Baguio-Benguet, covered the United Nations-accredited International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity held Jan. 30-Feb. 3 in Granada, Spain.



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Gov't raises La Niña alert

From page A1

Anthony Golez, deputy administrator of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), said the government was preparing the biggest flood mitigation plan that should be completed within six months. (See related story in Across The Nation on Page A18.)

Switch crops

The Department of Agriculture has been tasked with immediately conducting an information campaign among the country's farmers to advise them to change the type of crops they would be planting this season.

Farmers, in eastern Luzon particularly, should consider switching to crops suitable to the predicted high rainfall in the coming months.

"In the Philippines, which is also experiencing the southwest monsoon now, you have a situation where there's too much water in the wrong place at the wrong time," Yumul said.

Pagasa climatology chief Flaviana D. Hilario said the weather bureau had been monitoring anomalies in the sea surface temperatures in the Pacific since October last year.

Floods in the Visayas

From October to November last year, the Philippines experienced below normal rainfall. The cooling of the sea surface temperatures in the Pacific started in December.

From January to Feb. 12, some parts of the

Philippines received 300 times more than the average rainfall, triggering flash floods and mudslides in the Visayas and Mindanao, Hilario said.

Climate centers in Australia, Japan and the United States have also observed the La Niña conditions and predicted the phenomenon would continue for the next three to six months.

For an official La Niña event to be declared, the difference between actual and normal sea surface temperatures must be at least -0.5 points for a period of five months or until May.

Pagasa recorded -0.1 points from Jan. 15 to Feb. 11.

'Hardest hit'

Pagasa said the eastern seaboard of the Philippines would be hardest hit by the La Niña phenomenon. This includes Cagayan Valley, Isabela, Southern Leyte, Leyte, Agusan del Sur and Norte, Davao Oriental, Samar, Aurora and the Bicol provinces.

The OCD has reported 14 fatalities, one injured person and six people missing due to rains this year. Around 280,000 people or 57,000 families in 24 municipalities and seven provinces have been affected.

Some 5,700 families have also been evacuated, but many of them have decided to return to their homes due to the recent fair weather. With a report from David A. Hayes

IN THE KNOW

LA NIÑA, LITERALLY "THE LITTLE GIRL," IS A TERM USED by meteorologists to describe unusually cool sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean. Changes in the atmospheric pressure in the Pacific, calculated by comparing air pressure between Tahiti and Darwin, Australia, are also linked to La Niña events.

Its four major effects are flooding, soil erosion, storm surges and strong winds.

It is the opposite of El Niño ("The Little Boy") which is characterized by unusually warm ocean temperatures and results in less rainfall and fewer tropical cyclones.

One of the most destructive typhoons during the La Niña phenomenon in 1999-99 was Typhoon "Nanang." It struck the Visayas on Dec. 12, 1998, leaving 17 people dead, 24 missing and P247 million in damage to crops and property.

Environmental watchdog Greenpeace said the 1982-83 El Niño, considered the strongest in the 20th century, claimed some 1,500 lives and cost the world economy more than \$8 billion.

The Philippines lost some \$450 million. The output of agriculture, fishery and forestry dropped 8.6 percent due to drought in the first half of 1998 and strong typhoons later that year.

Floods (December 2005 to February 2006)

First week of December

- Oriental Mindoro is hit by flooding due to heavy rains. Hundreds of families are evacuated. Flooding intensifies before Christmas, displacing thousands.
- Heavy rains force over 12,000 residents from at least 14 villages in Lucena City to evacuate to safer ground as

floods continue to rise.

- Four bridges in Cagayan Valley are closed due to floods, families start to leave their homes. Rivers in Isabela and La Union swell, swamping four bridges.
- Two weeks of incessant rains trigger floods in six villages in Palo town, Leyte, affecting over 8,000 persons.

Dec. 17

Typhoon "Duedan" hits southern Luzon, including Oriental Mindoro, Palawan, Camarines Sur and Sorsogon, and some parts of the Visayas, including Aklan, Iloilo and Capiz. Six are reported dead and thousands of families are evacuated.

Dec. 23

In Zamboanga del Norte, a farmer dies following a mudslide and flash floods due to heavy rains.

Dec. 24

Residents of six villages in Zamboanga City are evacuated after flash floods submerged their areas.

Dec. 27-29

Provinces in Northern Luzon, including Isabela, La Union and Aurora, are submerged due to heavy rains.

Jan. 25

Tropical depression "Agaton" causes floods in Isabela, Nueva Ecija, Aurora, Pampanga and Nueva Vizcaya. Three are reported killed. Millions worth of crops are destroyed.

February

In Southern Leyte, seven people are killed due to a mudslide caused by heavy rains.

PDI Research

GI in Sulu in hot water for shooting stray animals

From page A1

shooting stray animals that wander into his team's compound, according to a local report.

Rice has continued to shoot at stray animals despite repeated admonitions from officials of the Philippine Marine Battalion Landing Team (MBLT) 4, the report said.

"The casualties" were not identified in the report. But in the countryside, house pets like dogs, cats, chickens and ducks usually have the run of the place.

Ironically, the visiting US troops are soon to offer veterinary services as part of their civic projects in the area.

Reached by phone in Manila, US Embassy spokesperson Matthew Lussenhop said that the

mission was still looking into the reported animal shootings, and that "disciplinary action" would be imposed if necessary.

"US servicemen are operating under strict rules of engagement and rules of behavior, and if those rules are found to have been violated, there will be some kind of disciplinary action," Lussenhop said.

Only days earlier, the embassy said US servicemen taking part in Balikatan exercises this year were expected to behave like "informal ambassadors" of their country and to avoid any act that might "offend" Filipinos.

The conduct of visiting American troops has drawn closer scrutiny since the alleged rape of

a 22-year-old Filipino woman by US Marines on Nov. 1 last year at the Subic Freeport.

Four Marines have been prevented from returning to their home base in Okinawa and are facing trial in an Olongapo City court.

Debates over US custody of the four accused and over the future of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement are going on in Congress.

On the beach

Rice was reportedly caught shooting at stray animals on Feb. 10 at around 7:45 p.m. on Seit Higad beach—where his unit had set up quarters—in Seit, Panamao, Sulu.

The soldier caused a ruckus as he "indiscriminately fired his issued firearm [at] stray animals entering their occupied compound," the report said, adding: "It was not the first time that said shooting happened."

The report quoted members of the 24th Marine Company under the MBLT 4, which also set up quarters on the beach, as saying that "Rice himself frequently leads the shooting whenever stray animals enter the compound."

MBLT 4 officials reportedly admonished the Americans, saying that killing stray animals would "destroy the good rapport [they had] established with the residents in the area."

But Rice was "not heeding their advice," the report said.

The RP-US Balikatan exercises in Sulu are to open on Feb. 20 and run until March 5.

Civic missions

To fend off criticism that US soldiers were interfering in local operations against terrorists, the Balikatan has in recent years integrated US civic missions into the military exercises to serve the local population.

The US advance party, which includes Rice's unit, launched their "civil military operations" in Sulu on Jan. 20.

Aside from medical and dental services, "limited veterinary services" are also to be provided dur-

ing medical missions.

Valentine's Day march

Meanwhile, dozens of activists held a Valentine's Day march near the US Embassy to demand the revocation of the VFA.

Holding up red heart-shaped placards reading "US out of Philippines now," the marchers said the VFA was putting American troops above Philippine laws and failing to protect the Filipinos' interests.

"What the Filipinos have with the US is clearly a parasitic and abusive relationship—a relationship between unequal entities," said marcher Corazon Requito. With reports from Volt Contreras and AP

Blasted hopes, broken dreams for 14 minors

From page A1

them before a juvenile court," said Director Marcelo Ele, head of the Anti-Illegal Drugs and Special Operations Task Force.

Parents tested positive

The minors who will not be charged include those who did not test positive or were not found with drugs or drug paraphernalia, or were too young. Some were aged 7 and below. One was a 4-month-old baby whose mother had brought her child to the drug den.

That baby's mother was among six parents who tested positive for shabu, Ele said.

Police have turned 31 of the minors over to Pasig's social welfare unit. Only three of them were attending school.

The results of the drug tests on

the minors shocked social workers in Pasig.

Young runners

Ele said those who did not test positive for drugs and who were not found to have drugs or any drug paraphernalia on them would be released to their nearest relative.

Ele earlier said that the youngsters were not customers but "runners" who were used to deliver drugs and other paraphernalia to the different stalls and shacks in the compound.

All in all, the raiders arrested a total of 319 people in the compound just a few hundred meters from Pasig City Hall and Pasig police headquarters.

About 200 adults facing charges are accused of offenses ranging from drug pushing, drug

use, illegal possession of drugs or paraphernalia, maintenance of drug dens, visiting drug dens and illegal possession of firearms.

The eldest among the adults was a 65-year-old man.

The discovery of the colony of drug addicts has led to the sacking of two dozen police officers, including Pasig police chief Senior Supt. Raul Medina.

Pasig policemen have also been subjected to drug tests.

Social workers said an environment where peddling shabu had become a primary way to earn a living made it easier for the children to get into drugs.

Wrong values

"The values itself is lacking. They are developing the wrong attitudes," Delleva said.

Those minors who tested posi-

tive for drugs will be sent to rehabilitation centers. Those who tested negative, including a 16-year-old girl who is seven months pregnant, will be returned to their families.

But Delleva said social workers would have to check first if the relatives would be capable of raising the children.

"If the place is still detrimental for the minors, we will seek assistance from our head office for the possibility of bringing them to institutions," she said.

Declaring that President Macapagal-Arroyo "means business," Malacañang said the dismissal of 26 Philippine National Police personnel should serve as a warning to those who were not doing their jobs.

This showed the "firm resolve of the government to discipline errant

corps who fail in their duty to fight crime and protect our people," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

"The President means business."

Over dzRH radio, Ms Arroyo reiterated that the government would continue to break up drug dens in Metro Manila.

Police involved?

Pasig Mayor Vicente Eusebio plans to order a mandatory drug testing of all City Hall employees amid suspicions that some employees and even policemen had protected the raided shabu enclave.

Eusebio said if investigation would confirm that his employees were among those employed up, he would "quickly order that all employees in the City Hall undergo drug testing."

He also ordered the drug test-

ing of all city policemen.

"Some barangay officials told me that they were afraid of reporting drug pushers to policemen, fearing that some of these officers could be involved in drugs as well," Eusebio said.

Medina's side

Senior Supt. Romeo Abaring has been assigned to take over the post of Medina.

"I have explained my side. I accept the decision," Medina told the inquirer.

Medina said his men had conducted several operations in the area, resulting in several arrests.

"The problem is many of the suspects would just post bail and quickly go back to (illegal drugs)," Medina said. With reports from Christine O. Avenaño and Norman Bordadora

OFW blew lid off secret 'shabu' flea market

From page A1

become unruly during a "session" in one of the 60 shanties inside the compound, and people beat him black and blue. He wanted to get even and continued to go to the place, not only to "score" but to observe, he said.

Once, he said, he saw uniformed policemen in the compound. They were apparently regulars because the other customers and merchants didn't mind them. Another time he saw a patrol car stop outside and somebody from inside handed money to its occupants.

The OFW said some of the regular customers apparently were from the moneyed class. One night, he saw luxury cars—a Mercedes Benz, a BMW and a Toyota Land Cruiser—parked outside. There were also big bikes.

Hidden camera

The OFW sought out Erwin and told him everything.

"At first, I thought he was 'praning' (paranoid) because he was talking fast and couldn't be understood," my brother said. Wanting to get rid of the man, Erwin told him to just come back.

The OFW kept coming back. Exasperated, Erwin asked if he was willing to have a hidden camera installed on his person.

The camera was as tiny as a button, its eye as small as a needlepoint.

Bingo! When the OFW came back, he had a video of people selling shabu openly. In a second surveillance, Erwin sent his own TV crew. Again, the video showed people doing brisk business.

Erwin sought my help in approaching the authorities. He wanted his show and my own "Isambong Mo kay Tulfo" program to have a combined coverage if any raid should take place.

The problem was who, among the police, could we trust with our "bombshell"?

Man of the hour

We went to PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao. He nearly fell off his chair when he saw the video.

"That's impossible! How can that happen in the heart of Pasig City?" he said.

Lomibao called somebody on his cellular phone and told him to come immediately. It was Director Marcelo Ele Jr., the chief of the PNP Directorate for Intelligence and Detective Management and head of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force (Aidsot). He arrived in no time.

"Ask me for anything you need

to complete the mission, I'll give it to you," Lomibao told Ele.

"It's a top secret mission. Only you, Mon, Erwin and I know about it at this point. If it leaks out, one of us did it."

Ele went to work. He asked if Erwin's cameraman, who was hiding the informant, could come and give him all the details about the place.

That same day, Ele and the cameraman flew over the compound, using a borrowed Air Force helicopter so people below would not suspect anything.

With the information gathered from the air and on the ground, Ele pinpointed the possible entry point and the areas where to deploy men to prevent an escape.

Shootout feared

Mapayapa compound is about a hundred meters away from the city's public market. The place reeks with people.

"This will entail a big operation," Ele said in our second meeting. "Many men will be involved. A blitzkrieg. The problem is how will a big number of policemen get there without being detected?"

Ele, a two-star police intelligence man, also considered that some of the residents/drug pushers in the compound were armed

and ready to fight if cornered.

Ele expected strong resistance, possibly even a shootout.

Ground assault

Erwin suggested we borrow Air Force choppers and have some crack police troops rappel down into the compound in a blitzkrieg attack. The main group would launch an assault from the ground.

Ele pondered over the suggestion, then said: "If we use choppers, our boys will have to be covered by machine-guns from the choppers while they're rappelling down. We might hit innocent civilians."

"We will have to assault entirely by land," he said.

On Friday, about 100 PNP commandos in full battle gear assembled at the Camp Crame grandstand. They would make the assault.

Countersigns used

Aidsot personnel were also around, along with chemists from the PNP crime laboratory and police from the traffic group.

At the Aidsot office, Ele made final preparations with assault team leaders Supt. Eduardo Acierito of Aidsot and Chief Insp. Ericson Dilag of the Special Action Force.

"Let the SAF do the fighting," Ele said. "We'll take cover while the firefight is going on. We will fire back if we're fired at. This way, we won't be hitting each other."

As a countersign, all nonuniformed raiders, including our own crews, wore orange packing tape on both arms.

Handling the children

One group, composed of SAF troops, would surround the compound. The second group, the main assault body, would barge in. A third group, led by Ele and with whom we were imbedded, would go in only after the place had been "neutralized."

Also with our group were members of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency headed by retired Chief Supt. Rodolfo Caisip. There was also a team from the social welfare department to handle children caught in the compound.

No cell phones

But most of the people, including the SAF troops, didn't know what was going to take place. They were only going to be told by their commanders before they moved out of Camp Crame.

To prevent any leaks, all cellular phones of the raiders were deposited with their commanders.

To avoid detection, the 100 SAF troopers were packed like sardines into three commercial delivery vans. The nonuniformed raiders rode in a hired passenger bus. Others rode in their own cars.

It was the noon rush hour and the convoy took a long time to arrive at the compound.

On Soriano Street, where the compound was, many tricycles were lined up waiting for fares. Two vans unloaded their cargo of fully armed and sweating troops. They rushed the compound.

A third van disgorged other troops in a back street which Ele had deduced would be the escape route.

"Dapat Dapa! (Hit the ground)," the SAF troops shouted as they burst in, taking people inside by surprise. Some of the troops cursed as they ordered the men to lie face down on the ground.

Women without money

The interior of the compound was a maze of shanties.

The troopers kicked open some doors and saw some women in various stages of undress. Our informant claimed women who didn't have money had sex with pushers in exchange for a fix.

The raid was over in less than five minutes.

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Hope floats for minors in prison

By Michael Lim Ubac

DECLARING THAT "JAIL IS NO place for a child," the House committee on justice yesterday approved the comprehensive juvenile justice system bill which seeks to stop the widespread practice of integrating juvenile delinquents with hardened criminals.

If enacted, 70 percent of criminal cases against children will be dismissed outright while others will be referred to rehabilitation

programs, according to the Juvenile Justice Network-Philippines (JJNP).

Data from the JJNP, a broad coalition of government and non-government organizations pushing for the child protection law, showed that as of September 2005, about 4,000 minors "in conflict with the law" were in jail. Of the figure, 467 were in Metro Manila jails under the supervision of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology. The figure did not

include those detained in police stations or under the custody of the social welfare department.

Most of them were charged with minor crimes such as petty theft, sniffing of glue or other solvents, vagrancy and violation of curfew hours.

The JJNP expects the proposed law to keep children with petty offenses out of jail, providing them with "child rights-based treatment."

Maguindanao Rep. Simeon Da-

tumanong, the committee chair, asked the plenary to fast-track the approval of the measure since an average of 10,515 juvenile delinquents are arrested and detained annually.

"Some 28 errant youths are placed under arrest everyday who, at their very young age, have already lost their innocence to the harsh realities of life," he said.

He added that House Bill No. 5065 was a product of "painstaking efforts" to reach out to "youth-

ful offenders who are hapless victims, too, of the cold and retributive criminal justice system."

Besides being treated as "social outcasts" at a very young age, the minors were exposed to greater physical and psychological harm, including sexual abuse, he said.

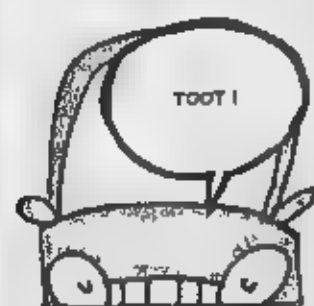
Dahumanong said the proposed law took into consideration the best interest of the child as "its primordial principle" consistent with the ideals of the 1987 Constitution, the international standards

on relevant treaties, and human rights instruments which uphold the fundamental rights of the child.

One major feature of the proposed justice system is increasing the age bracket of those offenders exempted from criminal responsibility from 9 years old to 12 years old. However, offenders above 12 years old but below 15 years old, and those aged 15 but below 18 "shall be subjected to an appropriate intervention program."

METROBRIEFS

No blowing of horns in 'Silent Zones'



FIVE Quezon City councilors want public places like schools, churches and hospitals to be declared "Silent Zones" to stop passing motorists from blowing their horns or sirens and playing loud music. In a proposed ordinance, the councilors said the noise made by cars and other vehicles could be a distraction. A "peaceful and quiet environment" is conducive to teaching in school, worshipping in church, and treating patients in a hospital, they added. Under the proposal, first time violators shall be fined P1,000 or imprisoned for a month. Subsequent offenders shall be fined P3,000 or imprisoned for six months, or both, depending on the discretion of the court. The proposed ordinance was introduced by Councilors Resty Malangen, Rommel Abesamias, Eric Rey Medina, Francisco Caisay Jr. and Janet Malaya.

No more Fridays with Dr. Alfredo

By DJ Yap

THE PAST FRIDAYS HAVE BEEN QUIET AT the San Agustin Clinic in Quezon City.

There are no crowds waiting in line to get free medical attention for their ailments. Gone too is the good doctor who used to spend the whole day treating the poor and needy.

Dr. Alfredo San Agustin, who dedicated his Fridays for the past 40 years attending to the medical needs of the disadvantaged, passed away last Jan. 16 at the age of 74.

San Agustin, who succumbed to liver cancer, was cited as Quezon City's Most Outstanding Citizen in the field of medicine in 2004 for his commitment to serving the poor both as a doctor and citizen.

But while San Agustin may be gone, his mission will continue.

Gina San Agustin and Dr. Tess San Agustin-Rusch have decided to carry on their father's charity clinic also called "Thank God, It's Friday."

"We will continue his legacy," said Tess. "We have to look forward to the future."

On Friday, the clinic will once again open its doors to the poor for a medical mission from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 5-C Kamuning Road.

Operations at the Friday clinic were suspended early this year when San Agustin died. But his daughters have vowed to pay tribute to his kindness and generosity by continuing what he had begun.

"I was 4 years old when my Dad took me to a remote area in Quezon City, with a bag box of medicine on his right shoulder and his other hand holding me," Gina recalled.

"Even when my Dad was all alone treating sick people, it was already a medical mission," she added. "We will take it from there."

San Agustin was laid to rest on Jan. 26. His family, friends and the people he had treated gave him a warm sendoff with prayers and a tribute.

Friday's medical mission will be conducted in cooperation with Solway, a pharmaceutical company that will provide needed medical equipment, such as an electrocardiogram machine.

Dr. Ernie Capulong, a longtime family friend, and Dr. Marc Dy, a young physician, will also help provide medical care for the patients.

Bagatsing, 89

FORMER MANILA MAYOR RAMON D. Bagatsing died at 5:30 a.m. yesterday in his house at Alabang Hills, Muntinlupa. He was 89.

Bagatsing is survived by his wife, Juanita Hubria Sevilla, and children Roca, former Congressman Amado and Ramon Jr., Jesus, Manuel, Eduardo and Valentino.

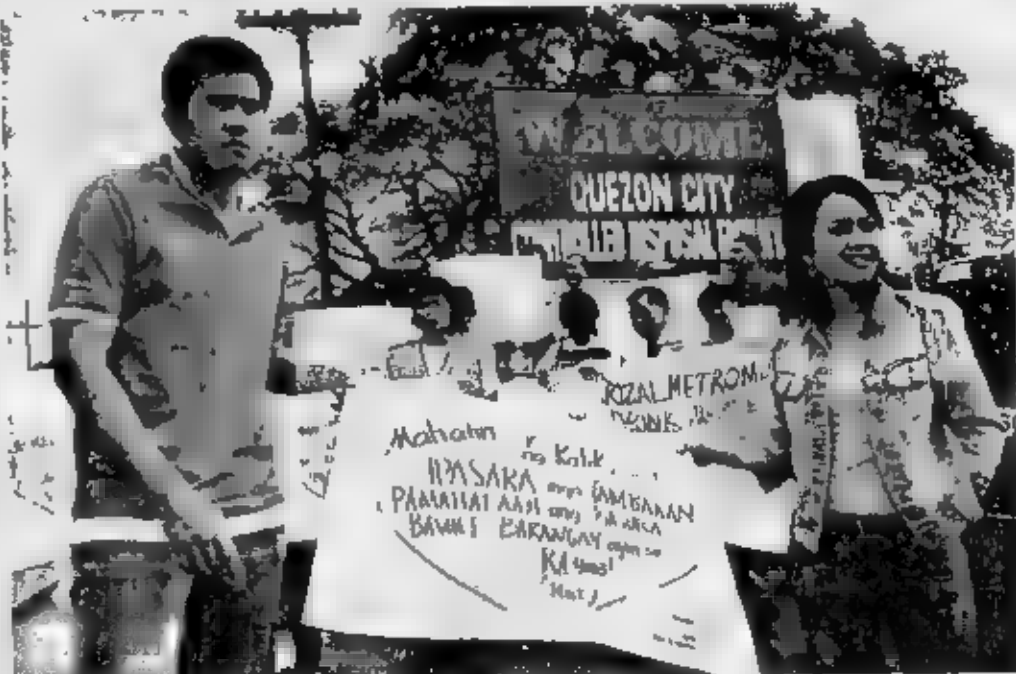
Born on Aug. 19, 1916, in Fabrica, Sagay, Negros Occidental, Bagatsing led a colorful life as a Manila policeman, soldier and politician. He started his public career as a patrolman in the Manila Police Department from 1939 to 1941.

When World War II broke out in 1941, he enlisted in the US Armed Forces in the Far East to fight Japanese invasion forces. From 1957 to 1965, he served in Congress as the representative of Manila's third district. His term was interrupted when he joined the Cabinet as chief of the Presidential Agency on Reforms and Government Operations from 1967 to 1969. He ran again for his old seat in Congress, and was elected for a third term in 1969.

Bagatsing also served as mayor of Manila from 1971 to 1986. He survived the bloody Plaza Miranda bombing incident in 1971.

Bagatsing passed the bar in 1949 and obtained a Master of Laws degree from the University of St. Thomas in 1970. The former mayor was also chairman of the Manila Red Cross chapter and member of its board of directors, past national president of the Philippine Jaycees, Lions Club district director and international director.

He was the founder and benefactor of the Ramon D. Bagatsing Scholarship Foundation, Inc. which has given away more than 1,300 grants to poor and deserving students.



"HOUSEMATES" Nene Tarnayo and Bob de la Cruz, of a popular reality TV show, led a rally yesterday to call for the closure of the Payatas dump in Quezon City.

JOAN SONDOZ

Metro garbage fate still hangs

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

RODRIGUEZ (RIZAL) MAYOR PEDRO CUERPO is not only prepared to accept more garbage from the metropolis, he is also looking forward to seeing the Payatas dump in Quezon City formally closed.

He said the dump, which is supposed to close this week as provided for in the Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, is situated at the boundary of Quezon City and Rodriguez (formerly Montalban), has turned the entry point to his town into an eyesore. "Who would want to invest in our town when we have a dump at our entry point?" Cuervo said.

The Payatas dump and the controlled dump in Navotas, which have been accepting trash from a few areas in Metro Manila, are set to close tomorrow as mandated by law.

But Cuervo said there was no reason to worry because the 14-hectare Montalban Solid Waste Disposal Facility, a sanitary landfill not affected by the law, was ready for more trash.

In open dumps, piles of garbage are just dumped in an area without being treated, unlike sanitary landfills where a filter prevents leachate from seeping into the water table, soil layers are dumped to cover every layer of trash and there are waste water treatment facilities.

Cuervo said they were also planning to expand the facility, should there be a need for it. He said at least 60 hectares of land were still available in the area to accommodate more trash. The facility serves at least 10 of the 17 towns and cities in Metro Manila.

But environmental groups, like Bangon Kalikasan Movement, had long been against the

facility, which is situated near a creek and accepts mixed instead of segregated trash.

"Mayor Cuervo may be ready to accept more garbage but the environment and the people of Rodriguez are greatly affected from the destruction caused by the dump," added Dr. Pastor Cruz of the Montalban Environmental Protection Council.

The town used to be the watershed for Metro Manila and adjoining provinces north and south. Today, its once lush and green slopes are now denuded, there is wanton quarrying plus the threat of tons of garbage being dumped in the area, said Kalikasan's Joey Papa.

With the deadline for the closure of 262 controlled dumps and 734 more open dumps fast approaching, some authorities are saying that only sanitary landfills will now be allowed under the law to accept waste, added Papa.

"The real alternative, the environment friendly and sustainable solution, which is ecological waste and resource management, is being disregarded," he said, adding that these so-called "sanitary" landfills are just dumps with "token" provisions on safeguards.

Cruz said a former secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources reportedly granted the Rodriguez dump a "midnight" environment clearance certificate as a "sanitary landfill" in 2004 after it started operating much earlier in 2002.

But according to experts, including the US Environmental Protection Agency, there is no such thing as a "sanitary" landfill, said Papa. "Protective" liners installed against landfill walls can easily be destroyed by ordinary household items like vinegar or cleansing agents thrown into the landfill, he added.

Gate issue resurfaces at BF Homes

By Jocelyn R. Uy

RESIDENTS OF BF HOMES PARAÑAQUE ARE blaming the city government for the growing number of crime incidents inside the subdivision.

The United BF Homeowners Association Inc. (UBFHAI) had opposed the turnover of control of the subdivision's main gates to the city government last September, saying it would expose the roughly 10,000 homeowners to criminals who can now freely enter the area.

"The crime rate has surged, especially carjacking and molestation cases, since the local government opened it (gates) up," UBFHAI president Celso Reyes said in a phone interview.

BF Homes Parañaque, which extends to the cities of Las Piñas and Muntinlupa, is the biggest subdivision in the country. It also has 46 schools, including the Southville International School.

For the past two months, the UBFHAI has already recorded seven cases of car theft. The latest incident happened last Sunday, in which a 19-year-old boy, Richard Capili, a student of Southville, was shot dead by car thieves right inside the subdivision.

Reyes said that on the same day, thieves also

broke into three cars parked inside the subdivision.

A homeowner, who requested anonymity for security reasons, said that since the main gates were opened to the public, cases of aklat-bahay and cellphone snatching have become rampant.

"But this is the first time that somebody died," the homeowner said.

"It would have not happened if our security was intact. Before, we had about 70 security people, but they (local government) took them away," Reyes told the INQUIRER.

He claimed that only six policemen had been detailed to the subdivision.

However, Parañaque City police chief Supt. Ronald Estilles said that Sunday's carjacking incident had no bearing on the opening of two of the subdivision's main roads—El Grande and Aguirre Avenues—to the public.

"The incident did not happen on those streets. The incident took place 200 meters away from the main gates," Estilles told the INQUIRER.

He also refuted Reyes' claim, saying there are about 35 policemen who keep watch over the subdivision. Security was augmented in the subdivision with the launching last December of 12 bike patrols, he added.

Manila cops shape up



MANILA policemen have no more excuse for being fat and out of shape. The Manila Police District (MPD) yesterday began its kickboxing and tummy trimming sessions as part of an improved fitness program for all law enforcers and civilian employees. MPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong said the program was aimed at getting all the district's personnel in shape so that they could run after criminals. "The MPD's fitness program is not only good for physical health but also essential in instilling professionalism, integrity and discipline," Bulaong said in a statement. "We believe that this fitness program could be considered as a key to crime suppression because it would eventually create a new breed of cops with increased strength and vigor," Bulaong added. The MPD had earlier signed a memorandum of agreement with the Philippine Council for Strength and Fitness Inc. (PCSF) to draft and initiate a fitness program suited for Manila policemen. PCSF officials earlier explained that the Manila policemen would be required to undergo Arnis self-defense training, weight training, police obstacle course activities, physical ability tests, fighting fitness for female members of the Special Weapons and Tactics team, bodybuilding, and a 12-week "extensive tummy trimming weight reduction system."

Margaux C. Ortiz

Fiery Valentine's Day

A FIRE hit a church in Las Piñas City yesterday, destroying P1-million worth of property. According to deputy fire marshal Aldwin Salazar, the fire began shortly after 10 a.m. in the caretaker's quarters beside the Las Piñas Evangelical Church on Daisy Street in Pilar Village, Barangay Talon Dos. "The caretaker's son, who was the only one left in the house, immediately ran outside when the blaze started," Salazar said, relating witnesses' accounts. Fire investigators have yet to determine the cause of the fire which later spread to the church, but said it might be electricity-related. The blaze was put out at 11:45 a.m., but not before it burned down the church altar and some musical instruments. No one was hurt or killed in the incident.

Jocelyn R. Uy

2 hurt in Pasig accident

TWO persons were injured when the debris from a concrete wall fell on them in Pasig City yesterday. Erlinda Florendo, 42, and construction worker Rolly Lubrette, 28, sustained wounds in their arms and knees. But another construction worker police identified as a certain Ricardo, was believed to still be under the rubble, as rescuers continued digging through the debris, as of press time. The six-meter wall attached to at least two houses at 195 Diaz Street in Barangay Pineda, leaned forward and almost collapsed at about 3:30 p.m. The excavation ran parallel to the ground where the concrete wall, attached to the houses of Nicanor Afable and Florendo's father-in-law Eduviges, was standing. The excavation, ongoing for more than two weeks, was one-meter deep and less than a meter wide. PO3 Arman Valenzuela also said. Councilor Bobby Eusebio, who rushed to the area, said the old pipes were being replaced with new concrete pipes to improve the drainage system.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

St. Theresa's College-Manila homecoming

THE St. Theresa's College, Manila (STCM) homecoming will be held this Saturday, Feb. 18, at Pavilions A & B of the Wack-Wack Golf & Country Club in Mandaluyong City. Host class is Pearl Jubilarian HS '78. The oldest class is Double Platinum HS '31, to which the composer of the school song, Aurea Carballo-Gonzalez, a.k.a. author Freda Jayme, belongs. For the first time, there won't be a silver jubilarian class, as the last batch to graduate, HS '60, marked the milestone last year. To be announced during the homecoming program is the opening in June of the Mother Redempta Pre-School, run by the STCM Foundation. There will also be an update on the Mother Redempta Fund, the service arm of the alumnae association. The homecoming starts at 3 p.m. For inquiries, call 740-1810.

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RED Bull's Enrico Villanueva unleashes a jumper over Purefoods' Marc Pingris in Game 3 of the PBA Finals.

EDWIN BACAS/PAAS

Giants seek equalizer versus wounded Bulls

By June Navarro

IT'S RED BULL'S TURN TO make the adjustments.

"Some things are going to work for them after several games," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao Friday after Purefoods had sliced the Bulls' lead to 2-1 in the best-of-seven San Mig Coffee PBA Fiesta Conference title series with a 103-97 win.

"It's a good thing we're still in the lead because the next adjustment is ours to make."

Guiao and his wounded Bulls try to extend that lead at 6:45 tonight at the Araneta Coliseum, ready to deflate the Giants' new-found confidence and a full-court press that caught them off guard three nights ago.

"They (Giants) tried to press us, but I don't think that's the problem," Guiao said. "We will find a solution to that press, but the main problem is the [players'] energy lost."

Enrico Villanueva, the leading contender for the Best Player of the Conference award, Larry Fonacier and James Penny, like the others in the Bulls' offensive rotation, looked fagged out trying to make it 3-0 Sunday night.

Giving the Bulls a dose of their own medicine, the Giants worked behind a surprisingly solid full-court press to grab the momentum early in the second quarter, then built on it a cushion Red

6:45 p.m.—Red Bull Barako vs Purefoods
Game 1—Red Bull d. Purefoods, 107-102 (OT)
Game 2—Red Bull d. Purefoods, 90-84
Game 3—Purefoods d. Red Bull, 103-97

we're not a Marquin Chandler team," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio.

Incidentally, Chandler was fined another P9,200 by the Commissioner's Office for committing a technical foul in Game 3 off Larry Fonacier. Chandler's sixth technical for the tournament raised his total fines to P22,200.

Point guard Paul Artadi, seldom used after coach Ryan Gregorio began starting Roger Yap regularly, was also a decisive factor for breaking Red Bull's smothering press.

"It's going to be rugged and physical but we're not going to back down," said Gregorio. "We just brought back the old formula that gave us several wins at the start."

A victory for the Giants will prolong the series. And it could work in favor of the Bulls following

Bull never overhauled.

James Yap, Jordan Salvador, Kerby Raymundo and Noy Castillo shone offensively, and the Giants held together even after import Marquin Chandler took to the showers with still four minutes left because of fouls.

"We've now proven to everybody that

their semifinal series against Barangay Ginebra that went the distance.

"If we can get the next game, we can put up distance between us," said Guiao. "Otherwise, it will turn out to be a long series."

"Even so, I still feel good about my team because we can use the bench in a long series. We can use it a lot more than they can."



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Painters ready for showdown sans Tangkay

GAME TOMORROW (San Andres Gym)
3 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs Magnolia (Game 5 Finals)

By Jasmine W. Payo

CONTRARY TO PERCEPTION, RAIN OR SHINE coach Caloy Garcia believes the absence of Most Valuable Player Jojo Tangkay can turn the Painters' fortune around.

"I think it's an advantage because now every-

Cordero keeps top post

THE PHILIPPINE STAR'S ABAC CORDERO RETAINED his post as president of the Philippine Olympic Committee-Philippine Sports Commission Media Group via acclamation during elections over the weekend at the group's headquarters at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex (RMSC). Cordero is now on his third term as president of the Media Group, which is made up of 40 members from various newspapers covering the RMSC beat. Also retained via acclamation were Mao Ochao of Filipino Star Ngayon, vice president for internal affairs; Waylon Galvez of People's Journal, vice president for external affairs; Nick Giongo of the Manila Bulletin, treasurer; and Marc Anthony Reyes of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, auditor. Zary Dadacay of the Business Mirror was elected secretary, while Manila Bulletin's Eddie Alina and Manila Times' Frank Calapre kept their respective posts as senior advisor and membership committee chair. Named to the board were Musong Castillo of the Inquirer, Russel Cadayona of Pang Mass, Gilda Tumo of Balita, Lito Ordo of Bandera and Mike Lee of Tumbok.

body will step up and quit relying on him," said Garcia, whose Painters blew a 2-0 lead in the title

Tangkay will be missing the winner-take-all Game 5 of the PBL Heroes Cup finals after the league suspended him for committing his second unsportsmanlike foul.

Even if the Commissioner's Office turned down Tangkay's appeal yesterday, Garcia thinks the Painters have enough offensive options versus the Magnolia Wizards.

The youthful mentor cited young gunners Erwin Sta. Maria, Paolo Orbeta and Yousif Aljamal to fill in the void left by the league's top scorer.

"I've talked to them and they committed that they will step up hard on Thursday," noted Garcia.

Tangkay himself believes that the Painters remain capable of clinching their second straight crown and seventh overall title since joining the league in 1998.

Tangkay, who bagged his first MVP plum last week, punched Magnolia star Arwind Santos on the nose in Game 4 last Sunday.

In Game 3, Tangkay was also slapped with an unsportsmanlike foul after hitting Santos on the face.

The Painters seemed headed for a title sweep after winning Game 1 (70-68 in overtime) and Game 2 (75-73) of the best-of-five series. But the Wizards fended a do-or-die showdown by claiming Game 3 (80-70) and Game 4 (61-57 in overtime).



MAGNOLIA power forward Mark Isip shoots off Rain or Shine's Marvin Ortiguerra and Jay-R Reyes in Game 4 of the series.

San Beda, St. Benilde booters dispute title

DEFENDING CHAMPION SAN BEDA GUNS for its fourth straight title today when it meets rival College of St. Benilde in the men's football finals of the 81st National Collegiate Athletic Association at the ASCom Football Field in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

The Red Lions finished with the best 2-0-1 (win-loss-draw) record at the end of the first round for seven points, while the Blazers swept the second round with a 3-0-0 card worth nine points to arrange the title showdown.

Game time is 10:30 a.m.

The Taft-based St. Benilde squad is gunning for its first football crown since joining the country's oldest collegiate league in 1998.

The Red Lions and the Blazers split their elimination round meeting, with the former drawing first blood with a 2-1 win on Jan. 30. The Blazers took the second, 1-0, courtesy of striker Mark Ed Lusung's goal in extra time on Feb. 8.

The Mapua Cardinals and the Philippine Christian U Dolphins finished third and fourth, respectively.

In the juniors division, La Salle Green Hills tries to move closer to sweeping the elimination phase and a fourth straight title as it meets Philippine Christian U at 8:30 a.m. La Salle will face the SBC Red Cubs for its final elimination game on Sunday.

Moto Masters draws bets from 12 nations

RIDERS FROM THE PHILIPPINES AND 11 OTHER countries see action in the 2006 Motocross Masters of Asia set March 16-19 at the Puerto Princesa City motocross racetrack.

China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Japan, Guam, Saipan, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines will be represented in the event.

The event will be held in Puerto Princesa for the third straight year and it is expected to top attendance of the past two editions where more than 70,000 showed up to watch.

Defending champion Glenn Aguilar banners the crack Filipino team, which will have the benefit of tune-up races starting with the Namssa Camel International Supercross championships in Bacolod this weekend.

Round 2 will be held in Iloilo from March 2-5.

The event is being organized by the Namssa and supported by the City of Puerto Princesa, the Philippine Sports Commission, motorcyclephilippines.com and Inside Racing magazine.

PAL Interclub gets backing

DAVAO CITY—THIS YEAR'S PHILIPPINE AIRLINES Interclub, the country's oldest golf championship that had its beginnings in 1948, has garnered big corporate support once again.

Tournament chair Domingo T. Duermis said that the 59th Men's Regular Interclub and the 19th Seniors Interclub have attracted 14 major sponsors and nine other backers, attesting to the prestige and drawing power of the event widely acknowledged as the national clubs championship.

Acron Asia, Airbus, Boeing, GE Aviation, GMA 7, Honda Cars Davao, INQ7.net, Joey 92.3, Royal Caribbean International, Pegcor, People Asia, Premier Wine & Spirits, Rudy Project and UMBN are the major sponsors.

The corporate sponsors are ABS-CBN International, Fortune Tobacco and Radio Mindanao Network while 96.3 WRock, Asia Brewery, Century Park Hotel, Honda Megamotors, SM City Davao and Tandayay Rhum are minor sponsors.

The Seniors Interclub, a side event for players 55 years old and above, gets going from Feb. 17-19 at the Apo and Lanang golf courses while the Men's Regular event follows from Feb. 22-25 at Apo and Rancho Palos Verdes.

This year's competition has lured a cast of 71 teams for the Men's Regular and 73 for the seniors events. Of these, 54 clubs are from overseas, including the United States, Australia, Japan, Canada and Saudi Arabia.

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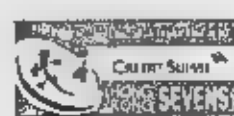
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Cuban maestro rejected

(ADVICE FROM AGIMAT: Countless other voices will be whispering in Manny Pacquiao's ears how to next deal with Erik Morales. It would, however, be wise to heed these words of a grizzled boxing aficionado: "Huwag, don't fall into the trap," says former senator Ramon Revilla, who also swears Pacquiao would be at a great disadvantage if he agrees to square off with Morales at 132 lb, the new limit being dangled by promoters headed by Bob Arum of Top Rank. In the first place, Revilla explains, the new weight was not stipulated in the rematch clause. Revilla says Morales is just desperate to avenge, at all costs, the shameful beating he had suffered against Pacquiao.)

HERE'S A BIG POST-VALENTINE'S THANKS to the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap) for acknowledging the offer by the League of Provinces of the Philippines to lend them the noted Cuban boxing coach under their hire.

Your reporter here had been tasked by Gov. Manny Piñol of North Cotabato to inform the Abap about the availability of Señor Honorato Espinosa, who won for his country its first Olympic gold in the 1972 Munich Olympics, to help prepare the RP national boxing team for the Doha Asian Games this year.

Piñol offered assistance after Raul Fernandez Liranza, the Cuban coach the Abap had been trying to rehire, failed anew to materialize at the airport.

Thank you, the Abap told Piñol, but they have other Cuban coaches in mind.

In a talk with our colleague Ed Picson, the no-nonsense sportscaster, Abap president Manny Lopez was quoted as saying he would rather stick it out with his Filipino staff than try his luck with Espinosa.

The outright refusal was based on what the Abap chief described as Espinosa's lack of qualities (to coach the RP team), as quoted by Picson in his column for the Manila Bulletin yesterday.

Said the Abap in a statement: "While we appreciate the comments and recommendations of people regarding who to hire as coach of the RP team, technically, the person that they are recommending does not fit our standards at present."

That statement, by the way, should also goad the Abap to new heights.

At least, they now appear certain on what should be done to regain winning form and to resume the hunt for the first Olympic box-

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad



ing gold for the country.

A joyful bump, indeed, because, after another debacle in the last Athens Olympics, the same Abap group cried and claimed they did not know how and why they had failed.

Well, if they did not know the reason behind the perennial failure, how in the world would they be able to finally win?

That said, it goes without saying that Abap's newfound formula includes shunning, skipping and disregarding the likes of Honorato Espinosa who, by the way, had also landed a total of 27 gold medals from international tournaments for Cuba.

Now, this is not an effort to flog a dead horse, as the cliché goes.

But we find it our duty to assure that Señor Espinosa, old as he may be, also happens to be a main cog who works as deputy to the great Dr. Alcides Sagara, revered as the architect of Cuba's magnificent national boxing program.

Espinosa, if we are to believe what we saw in Havana last year, was the keeper of the key, one reason he was personally recommended to help in the Philippines by Cuban Ambassador Jorge Rey Jimenez.

Espinosa, we were told, will start moving around the country starting next month to spread the gospel of sound Olympic boxing, under the auspices of the League of Governors.

Now, the best we can do is again wish Manny Lopez and his staff the best of luck in their forthcoming quest for glory.

Of course, we have to take exception to what Lopez had mentioned that "Espinosa had failed to produce, in four years as coach of the Cambodian boxing program, a single gold medal, not even in the SEA Games."

We won't call that basis behind the rejection by the Abap of Espinosa hysterical.

But, hey, Cambodia winning a boxing gold could be equal to having Garcia or anyone in the Comelec hierarchy receive a Papal award for honesty.

At least, it cannot be said that the Cuban maestro did not dare try the impossible.

Lebron scores 44 as Cavs rip Spurs

NEW YORK—LEBRON JAMES scored 44 points to help the Cleveland Cavaliers end the San Antonio Spurs' nine-game winning streak with a 101-87 win over the defending NBA champions at the Quicken Loans Arena on Monday.

James shot 19-for-33 from the floor and added five assists and four steals for the Cavaliers (30-21), who won for the first time in three games.

Cleveland have struggled against the NBA's better teams this season, but turned in a solid effort against the Spurs, who had also won nine straight road games before this defeat.

As usual, James was the catalyst for the Cavaliers, posting his sixth 40-point game of the season.

"LeBron is one of the best players in this league when he is on his game," Cleveland coach Mike Brown told reporters.

"He willed himself to the rim and he willed this win for us."

James also spent a lot of time covering Tony Parker and as a result, the Spurs star point guard had a tough night, scoring just four points and committing seven turnovers.

"It was a bad combination for LeBron to be great and us giving up all those turnovers and

offensive rebounds," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich added.

The Cavaliers led 45-44 at the half, but took control in the third quarter and eventually built a 17-point lead at one stage in the fourth.

James scored 18 of his points in the third quarter and had 36 points by the time the fourth quarter started.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas had 17 points and 11 rebounds for the Cavaliers, while Drew Gooden chipped in with 10 points and 10 rebounds.

San Antonio shot 51 percent from the field to 49 percent for the Cavs, but the Spurs committed 18 turnovers to just five for Cleveland. The Spurs were also just 14-for-24 from the line.

Tim Duncan led San Antonio with 19 points and 10 rebounds, but he scored just three points in the final quarter. Manu Ginobili and Beno Udrih both added 12 points for the Spurs.

The Spurs (40-11) dropped into a first place tie with Dallas in the Southwest Division as the Mavericks routed the New York Knicks 100-72 at home.

Dick Nowitzki scored 21 points and Josh Howard added 14 points for the Mavericks. **Reuters**

COMPLETE RESULTS: Cleveland 101, San Antonio 87; Portland 91, Charlotte 83; Toronto 98, Minnesota 94; N.O. / Oklahoma City 97, Washington 96; Dallas 100, NY Knicks 72.

SOLAR Sports will air at 11:30 a.m. today the Houston-LA Clippers battle. It will be replayed at 5:30 p.m. Sportsplex will feature the New Jersey-Detroit tilt at 7 a.m., followed by the Orlando-Miami encounter at 9:30 p.m.



LAKERS' Smush Parker hangs on the rim after scoring on a reverse dunk as Jazz's Carlos Boozer (left) and Mehmet Okur look on in their NBA game Feb. 13. Parker was called for a technical foul for hanging on the rim. **AP**

Jaidee eyes hat trick in KL tourney

LONDON—THAILAND'S THONGCHAI JAIDEE will join a select band of players if he wins the Malaysian Open for the third year in a row at the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club on Sunday.

Only Ian Woosnam (Monte Carlo Open, 1990-92), Nick Faldo (Irish Open, 1991-93), Colin Montgomerie (PGA Championship, 1998-2000), Tiger Woods (WGC-NEC Invitational, 1999-2001) and Ernie Els (Heineken Classic, 2002-04) have previously achieved a title hat-trick.

The 36-year-old Thongchai, a late beginner in the sport, became the first Asian to retain a European Tour crown when he won at the Saujana Golf and Country Club 12 months ago.

"I have a lot of good friends in the city," he told the European Tour's official website. "I am always looked after very well and it feels like my second home."

"I have enjoyed some success there in the last two years and I will try to win for a third time. It would be very nice."

Thongchai prepared for his treble attempt by visiting the tournament venue at the end of 2005.

"Before the New Year I went to the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club for some practice rounds," he said. "The course was very soft then but the rough was also up so I think it will be a demanding week."

"I generally like the golf courses in Malaysia. The greens are receptive and that makes it easier for us to control our approach shots."

"The greens are tricky in places because of the undulations and the layout is such that you need to think your way round that golf course. It will be a good test."

Padraig Harrington of Ireland and Spain's Miguel Angel Jimenez lead a European bid to deny Thongchai his place in the history books.

Harrington will make his first appearance of the year in Thursday's opening round.

The Dubliner has had a run of near misses in the tournament, having been runner-up twice and in the top 10 on two other occasions.

Harrington was joint eighth last year, fading from contention with a closing 74 that left him 11 shots behind Thongchai.

Among the leading challengers is Lian-Wei Zhang, 40, who has five Asian Tour wins to his credit. In 2004, he became the first Chinese player to compete in the US Masters at Augusta. **Reuters**

Russians grab 12th straight pairs gold; US bets prevail

TURIN, ITALY—WITH GOLD-MEDAL WINNING grace, figure skaters Tatiana Totmianina and Maxim Marinin delivered Russia its 12th straight Olympic pairs title.

Around them, there were spectacular crashes everywhere Monday at the Turin Winter Games.

Helicopters and ambulances ferried injured skiers, boarders and

luge sliders off the Olympic slopes to local hospitals.

Winning the first figure skating gold of the Turin Games, Russia's "Tor and Mar" performed their best programs ever to continue a winning sequence by Russia or the Soviet Union that extends back to the 1964 Olympics.

Earlier, Russia's Svetlana Ishmouratova nailed 19 of 20 targets on

Cesana San Sica's 15-kilometer biathlon course to finish in 49 minutes, 24.1 seconds. Teammate Olga Pyleva took silver.

In smoky Bardonecchia, the day belonged to the American snowboarders. Following the men's example from the day before, Hannah Teter won gold and Gretchen Bleiler won silver in the halfpipe. **AP**

Agassi skips San Jose tilt with strained back

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA—ANDRE Agassi withdrew from this week's SAP Open because of a strained lower back, the latest injury setback for the star player.

Agassi, who was seeded second in the ATP event which began on Monday, told tournament director Bill Rapp on Sunday that he couldn't play.

Agassi experienced severe pain in his lower back and down his legs during a

workout on Sunday, tournament officials said in a news release.

Agassi, 35, has played only four matches since reaching the US Open final last September. He sprained his left ankle, playing racquetball on Oct. 12.

Agassi aggravated the injury during the season-ending Masters Cup in Shanghai, where he was upset by Nikolay Davydenko in the first round.

He pulled out of last month's Australian Open because of the injury and then lost to Guillermo Garcia-Lopez in the quarterfinals of the Delray Beach Championships this month in his first tournament of the year.

Agassi is currently ranked eighth in the world. His only tournament win last season came in Los Angeles, and he lost to world No. 1 Roger Federer in the US Open final in September. **AP**



AGASSI



FRENCH skater Yannick Bonheur throws partner Marilyn Pla during their performance in the Pairs Free Skating program. **AP**

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TV GUIDE

Wednesday, February 15, 2006



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Filipino-Mexican ring war looms

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

HE WANTED ME to call again after his meeting with Aaxan executives, but I didn't dare take the chance.

I had been trying to touch base with the man for the last 48 hours and I didn't want to wait another 48. Or more, lest he slip away again. Man-of-the-hour Manny Pacquiao hardly answers his cellphone now, and it is probably easier to get through to the President of the Philippines than to the country's "most wanted" person these days. "Just two questions," I bargained. He obliged.

"How do you feel about doing the blow-by-blow account for television of the Brian Viloria-Jose Antonio Aguirre fight in Las Vegas on Feb. 18 (Feb. 19 in Manila)?"

In a television interview where he was asked the same question, I heard Manny say that he's excited about the prospect because it's the first time he's doing something like this.

But Pacman had a different answer for me. "Para sa akin, isang malaking karangalan na mapili ako ni Brian," he said, disclosing that he and the Fil-Am boxer had developed a close friendship over the past months.

"Close kami kasi ang trainer namin, isa—si Freddie Roach. Ang gym na pinagpapraktisan namin, isa rin—yung Wild Card Gym sa Los Angeles. Yung mga kaibigan niya, kaibigan ko. Halos araw-araw nagkakasama kami pag nasa Los Angeles ako," Manny said.

Spontaneously, I blurted out a follow-up question: "Do you have any plans of staging a fight here in the Philippines with Brian in the undercard?"

It was not the second question I intended to ask, but I couldn't take it back because Manny was quick to the draw.

"In the works na yan. Hindi lang si Brian ang kasama, marunong pang iba like Boom Boom Bautista, Jinrex Jaca. Parang dual meet ang mangyayari: Filipino boxers versus Mexican boxers. Para mabigyan naman ng break ang mga boxers natin," Manny said.

Realizing that I had used up my two-query quota, I appealed. "Puwede bang tumawad, isa pang question? Sa tingin mo, saan dapat mag-improve si Brian?" I asked.

Manny was quiet for a while. "Improve, improve, improve..." he was thinking out loud. "More jabs and more hip movement."

I had actually prepared six questions. I thanked Manny who graciously granted the interview, even if he was in the midst of an important meeting, and advised him to go easy on the blow-by-blow.

"Huwag mong masyadong galangan, dahil baka mawalan ng trabaho si Quimto (Henson) at si Chino (Trinidad)," I said.

By way of a post-Valentine treat, the PBA is adding a dash of drama and romance to today's Game 4 of the San Mig Fiesta Cup best-of-seven title series.

I don't know how ABC-5 intends to do the side feature—whether it will be done on court or right where the lady seats. All I know is that young and dashing Purefoods hero James Yap will do something similar to what Vince Hizon did to then Patricia Bermudez, who is now his wife.

No, James will not ask for Kris Aquino's hand in marriage, like Vince did to Patricia. But he will profess his love for her publicly by presenting her with roses. It could be just a single red rose or dozens, to put the message across loudly.

I was not told if there would be a kissing scene. Kris celebrated her birthday on Valentine's Day yesterday, while James is observing his today.

It's hard to believe that Dave Batista, the WWE wrestling superstar with a humongous physique, is Filipino. But they say he is, although I still have to confirm this.

They say his real surname is Bautista but that his promoters have changed this to "Batista" to make it sound more exotic.

"Will he be here in Manila for the WWE Raw Live? I asked Solar Entertainment COO Peter Chanlong, who, to answer my query, had to give me a short lecture on professional wrestling.

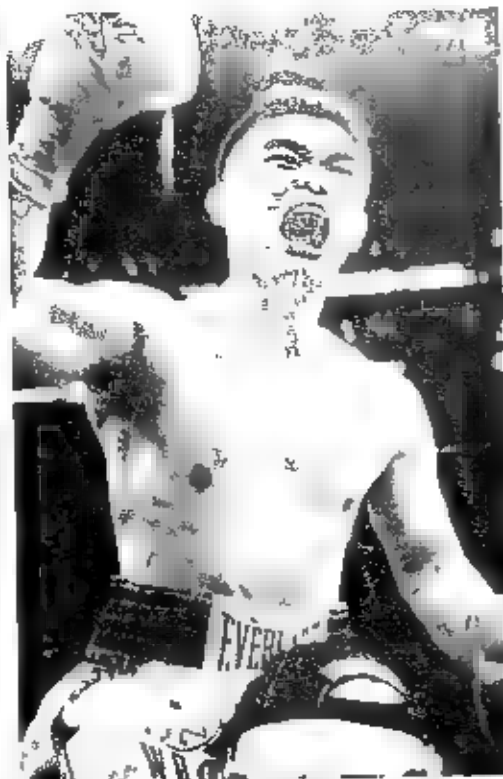
The wrestlers seeing action in Manila this February belong to the Raw group, while Batista is part of Smackdown, Peter said.

Due to the projected success of the Feb. 24-25 event, Peter said there are plans to bring Batista's group here in October.

While still on the topic of wrestling, I got another interesting update on Coke cager Rudy Hatfield from San Miguel exec Robert Non, who said that Rudy may decide to return to the PBA after all.

Confirming that the Fil-Am cager had indeed taken a fireman's course in Detroit to complete his college curriculum, Robert said Rudy had also tried to go into professional wrestling.

I suppose the cager didn't have enough bulk and hulk required in wrestling, because he failed to make the grade.



BRIAN Viloria celebrates his victory over Eric Ortiz of Mexico in Los Angeles last year.

Pacman sees Viloria winning by stoppage

BRIAN VILORIA HAS THE TOOLS TO stop Mexican Jose Antonio Aguirre in his first defense of the World Boxing Council (WBC) light flyweight crown on Saturday (Sunday in Manila) at the Aladdin Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, according to Manny Pacquiao.

"Brian is stronger and faster," world super featherweight icon Pacquiao said in Filipino. "All he has to do is find the right time and opportunity to land his knockout punch."

Pacquiao has great respect for the speed and punching power of Viloria. He has seen him fight and they train together in trainer Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles, California.

"I'm sure Aguirre will be defensive-minded because he is aware of his (Viloria's) power," Pacquiao said.

Viloria, 25, captured the title with a sensational first-round knockout of champion, Eric Ortiz, another Mexican, last Sept. 10 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. That was the same night Pacquiao destroyed Hector Velasquez in six rounds.

Viloria, son of an Ilocano couple from Narvacan, Ilocos Sur, is undefeated in 18 fights, 12 by knockout.

Pacquiao, who will be on deck along with veteran boxing commentator Quimto Henson to annotate Viloria's first title-defense, also gave the 108-lb king some pointers so he

can land his killer punch.

"He (Viloria) should throw more jabs and move his hips more often," Pacquiao said.

The jabs, he said, will build Viloria's rhythm and timing while the hip movement will help him catch his opponent off-guard.

"It's like the crossover in basketball," said Pacquiao, referring to the hip movement. "Your foe will not know where your punch will come."

But he advised Viloria not to lower his guard. Aguirre is a former champion, having ruled the WBC minimumweight division for nearly four years. The fighter called "El Jaguar" totes a 33-4-1 record with 20 KOs.

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BLANCHE Racing's Leo Joel Cordero zooms ahead of teammate Dave Jota in the finals faceoff at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Cordero bags nat'l drag racing crown

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—LEO JOEL Cordero of Blanche Racing bagged drag racing's Driver of the Year award following his impressive victory in the final round of the 2005 Red Horse-PCSO National Drag Racing Championship Series recently at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Cordero turned back teammate Dave Jota in the finals, clocking 13.349 seconds to capture the Pro class plum and finish with 45 points, the same output of Quick 8 champion Walter Pazon of Blanche Racing and Sportsman Class winner Bobby Cunanan of Just Racing.

But BRC drag racing director Fil Gulfin picked Cordero to receive the Drag Racer of the Year for having the most number of wins and a faster time.

"The first basis of the tiebreak was the number of wins, which booted out Pazon from contention," Gulfin explained. "The second was the time, and Cordero had posted the faster time over Cunanan."

Cordero will receive the top purse of P50,000 and the championship trophy during the 2005 Golden Wheel Award set Feb. 28 at

the Casino-Filipino Parañaque.

Pazon and Cunanan ended up with P15,000 each as champions in their respective divisions in the event held in cooperation with the Automobile Association of the Philippines (AAP) and sponsored by Red Horse, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), Petron, Sparco and supported by Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Denso Spark Plugs, Casino Filipino, GV 99 9 FM and DaBest 98.5 FM.

Pazon ended up as runner-up to teammate Dave Jota who registered a new track time of 11.833 seconds in the final race, but his four-leg total of 45 points earned him the Quick 8 championship.

Cunanan ruled the Sportsman Class over Felix Perez of Alps team with a time of 15.882 seconds.

Raymond Conti emerged the overall champion in the Hotstreet division despite finishing runner-up to Romeo Manuel, who ruled the final leg with a time of 16.403.

Bong de la Cruz bagged the Thunder class crown, clocking 14.558 seconds over Nathan Saguil of Just Racing.

RP muay team spots in world tilt at stake

SPOTS IN THE PHILIPPINE TEAM that will compete in the 3rd World Muay Thai meet late next month will be up for grabs in the 2006 National Championships set March 4 at the Amoranto Sports Complex in Quezon City.

The Quezon City government, led by Mayor Sonny Belmonte and Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista, is hosting the event that would hope to tap only the best for Team Philippines in the world joust in Thailand on March 18-26.

World Muay Thai rules and regulations will be enforced dur-

ing the national championships.

Competitions will be held in 12 categories ranging from 42 to 91-plus kilograms in the men's and women's senior division.

Categories in the 38 and 42 kg divisions in the junior level (10-17 years old) for both men and women have also been added.

Aerobic Muay Thai will also be featured in the tournament for the first time, as are the wai kru and muayboran.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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"IT'S TIME to give back to the industry," says the Mowelfund executive director.

JIM GUANO/FUNZALAN

By the Inquirer
Entertainment Staff

THE LEGENDARY actress Rita Gomez once cracked that colleague Boots Anson-Roa's screen image was so pristine, it would be easy to make people believe she had children by immaculate conception.

But as far as husband Pete Roa is concerned, the Mowelfund executive director is "more like Our Lady of Perpetual Help."

Boots explains what she refers to as her coping mechanism: "I have to listen to my husband. He always tells me, 'Don't let your mediatrix complex get the better of you. You can't solve the world's problems on your own.' Me, I tend to drown in the problems at work."

As she admitted during a recent visit to the Inquirer, Mowelfund's concerns can be a tad Herculean as it involves the welfare benefits of the oft-neglected and exploited movie workers.

But Boots, who recently marked her 61st birthday with a big fundraiser at Merik's, is not one to shy away from challenges.

She is in the thick of preparations for the annual "Pelikula at Lipunan" film fest (spearheaded by Nick Deocampo) set at the Gateway Mall from Feb. 24 to March 19 and Mowelfund's 32nd anniversary on March 11.

How was the fundraiser at Merik's?

We were there until 1:30 a.m. Around 20 artists performed for free—Pilita Corrales, Kuh Ledesma, Ramon Jacinto, Ivy Violan, Jerinne Desiderio, Jacqui Magno, Tinso Cruz III, Clara Sotto, Joy Viado — and Richard Merik, of course. Cesar Montano and Ricky Davao did a duet. German Moreno and my daughter Chiqui Roa-Puno hosted the show. We raised around P500,000—donations from Ramon Revilla Sr., Tony Tiviera, Sharon Cuneta, Juan Ponce-Enrile, Jose Man Chan, Precy Tolentino, among others. In the 2005 birthday concert, we raised P300,000.

How helpful were the funds raised last year?

We have lots of projects. But in 2001, a year before I became executive director, Mowelfund had to slash the members' benefits—for example, the death benefit from P35,000 to P25,000 and medicine reimbursement from P5,000 to P3,000. That was because our subsidy from the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) had gone down by 50 percent. We used to receive 60 percent of the amusement taxes, but now it's down to 30 percent. After the 2005 fundraiser, however, we restored the benefits to the original figures.

You have mentioned Mowelfund's

TAKE
FIVE

Mowelfund mediatrix

... a.k.a. Boots Anson-Roa, who says she will move heaven and earth—and eat humble pie—for the welfare of movie workers

graying membership as another challenge.

We have more honorary members, those who have been members in good standing for 10 consecutive years and have reached age 60. When a member acquires honorary status, he no longer needs to pay the annual fee of P300. Out of 4,500 members, 2,700 are active. Among the active members, 700 have reached honorary status.

Is it true that you have to resort to "creative" ways to solve Mowelfund's financial problems?

We had an *ukay-ukay* (garage sale) once. I also joined [the TV show] "Game KNB?" along with other Mowelfund members Eddie Romero, Joel Torre, Rez Cortez and Caridad Sanchez. I took Direk Eddie, a National Artist for Film. "Let's eat humble pie for Mowelfund." It was so funny, I was eliminated in the first round. The question was: Are the characters in the cartoon "Rugrats" mice? I said, "Yes!" Joel won P300,000 for us. He also won a computer showcase which I turned over to our graphics department.

Is it true that Mowelfund is the only one of its kind in the world?

That we know of. We feel heartened because other local groups are planning similar welfare systems.

Jun Nicaño of the Kapitan ng mga Broadcaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) and Raul Alvarez of the Advertising Board of the Philippines have approached us. We'll lend them our charter and by-laws.

Why did you agree to head Mowelfund?

In the words of our staff, "I was set up!" Hahaha! I became a board member in 1994. I was aware of what was happening. Still, I accepted because the movie industry has been very generous to my family. My father [Oscar Moreno] raised us with his earnings as an actor. Now, I am also making a good living in show biz. I felt it was time to give back.

Do you still have time for acting?

I have to make time. This is my bread and butter. I did the [MMFF entry] "Blue Moon" and [GMA 7 show] "Sugo." Now, I am in the film "Sukob," under Star Cinema. I was also offered to play Donita Rose's mother in an international movie.

You also did the digital film "Tusyon?"

It was just a one-day shoot. I was also in Peque Gallaga's "Pinoy Blonde."

I said yes to "Tusyon" because its directors, Paolo Villaluna and Ellen Ramos, were former staffers and graduates of Mowelfund. We have a film education component that has produced an impressive list of graduates—Lay Diaz, Mark Meily, Yam Laranas, Neil Daza.

What's your take on the MMFF controversies?

As [Metro Manila Develop-

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ENTERTAINMENT

Mowelfund mediatrix

From page A2-1

ment Authority Chair Bayani Fernando would say, intrigue is the MMFF's twin.

As head of Mowelfund, I'm a member of the MMFF executive committee. But to avoid [conflict of interests], I begged off from meetings in which "Blue Moon" was in the agenda.

There's a call to abolish the MMFF.

Of course, I don't agree. This is self-serving and selfish, I admit, because Mowelfund is a beneficiary of the

MMFF has really helped the industry. Let us not lose sight of that fact.

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Sta. Nita, Marikina City tel 934-1927

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3:00pm I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4:00pm BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN



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1:00pm PINK PANTHER
2:00pm CLOSE TO YOU
3:00pm UNDERWORLD-2
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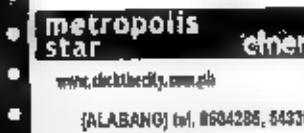
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(Marikina) tel (075) 568-6773

1:00pm I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2:00pm CLOSE TO YOU
3:00pm UNDERWORLD-2
4:00pm DERMALED



(Mandaluyong) tel 726-6160

3:00pm THE NEW WORLD
4:00pm CLOSE TO YOU
5:00pm I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU



(ALABANG) tel 860-4286, 860-3886

1:00pm I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2:00pm BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
3:00pm CLOSE TO YOU
4:00pm THE NEW WORLD



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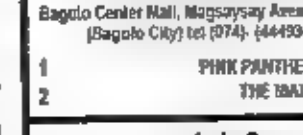


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3:00pm UNDERWORLD
4:00pm PINK PANTHER



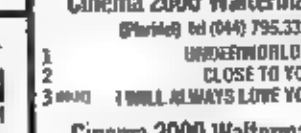
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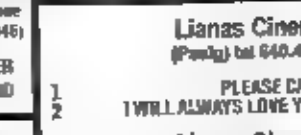
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3:00pm DERMALED
4:00pm SAW-2



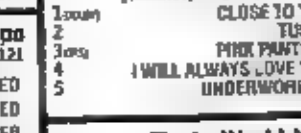
Cinema 2000 Walmart
(Bakara) tel (044) 795-3320

1:00pm UNDERWORLD-2
2:00pm CLOSE TO YOU
3:00pm I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU



Cinema 2000 Walmart
(Bakara)

1:00pm I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2:00pm CLOSE TO YOU



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1:00pm PLEASE CALL
2:00pm I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU



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1:00pm PLEASE CALL
2:00pm PLEASE CALL
3:00pm TUKSO
4:00pm PLEASE CALL



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2:00pm TUKSO
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ROUNDUP

'Panther' strikes

LOS ANGELES—Inspector Clouseau bumbled his way to the top of the box office as Steve Martin's "The Pink Panther" debuted with \$21.7 million to lead a rush of new releases.

The overall box office rose slightly despite the Winter Olympics and a Northeast snowstorm, both of which kept many moviegoers at home. Estimated ticket sales for the top 10 movies Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations, official tracker:

1) "The Pink Panther," \$21.7M; 2) "Final Destination 3," \$20.1M; 3) "Curious George," \$15.3M; 4) "Firewall," \$13.8M; 5) "When a Stranger Calls," \$10M; 6) "Big Momma's House 2," \$6.8M; 7) "Nanny McPhee," \$5.2M; 8) "Brokeback Mountain," \$4.2M; 9) "Hoodwinked," \$2.5M; 10) "Underworld Evolution," \$2.5M. **AP**



NORAH JONES

Film debut

HONG KONG—Grammy-winning singer Norah Jones will make her film debut in the first English-language film by acclaimed Hong Kong art-house director Wong Kar-wai, a film industry consultant said.

Wong was originally scheduled to shoot "Lady from Shanghai," featuring Oscar-winning actress Nicole Kidman, but has delayed the project until 2007 because they have not found a strong male lead actor, a film industry consultant attending the on-going Berlin Film Festival told The Associated Press by phone.

Details of the new movie weren't immediately available. **AP**

Out of control

NEW YORK—The Sundance Film Festival is too intense for Robert Redford, who says he wasn't around for all of it this year.

"To the outside world, it's a big fat market where you have people like Paris Hilton going to parties. Now she doesn't have anything to do with anything. I think the festival is close to being out of control," the festival's creator told Newsweek. **AP**

Peter

Benchley, 65

NEW YORK—Peter Benchley, author of the bestseller "Jaws" that was the basis for the blockbuster movie, died at his home at age 65, his family said on Sunday.

The book has sold more than 20 million copies, and Benchley even had a cameo as a reporter in the 1975 Steven Spielberg film. Well-known for other water-based suspense fiction including "The Deep" and "The Island," which also spawned films, Benchley died of complications from pulmonary fibrosis, his son-in-law Chris Turner said.

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE



CINEMA ACCESS
635-5555
FOR ALL BRANCHES

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 GALLERIA 632-9110

1 MUNICH • THX	5 AEON FLUX
2 CLOSE TO YOU	7 FIREWALL
3 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN	8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 GOAL	9 NEW WORLD
5 PINK PANTHER	10 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

2 HERMITA 632-7009 to 12

1 CLOSE TO YOU	5 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE	6 PINK PANTHER
3 NEW WORLD	7 GOAL
4 AEON FLUX	8 WALK THE LINE

3 METRO 632-9193 • 632-9199

1 NEW WORLD	5 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 PINK PANTHER	6 FIREWALL
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	7 CLOSE TO YOU
4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN	8 WALK THE LINE

4 NOVALICHES 635-3231 / 635-3230-39

1 PINK PANTHER	4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE	5 GOAL
3 FIREWALL	6 CLOSE TO YOU
	7 AEON FLUX

5 CITISQUARE MALABON 296-2676 PIONEER 637-6370

1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	1 PINK PANTHER
2 CLOSE TO YOU	2 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
3 RESERVE	3 AEON FLUX
4 RESERVE	4 CLOSE TO YOU

AEON FLUX
Action-Figure Making Contest

Display Schedule: February 16 to 25
Exhibit Venue: Robinsons Movieworld Cinema Lobby

Prizes include:

- 1st Prize: AEON FLUX Action Figure
- 2nd Prize: AEON FLUX Action Figure
- 3rd Prize: AEON FLUX Action Figure
- 4th Prize: AEON FLUX Action Figure
- 5th Prize: AEON FLUX Action Figure
- 6th Prize: AEON FLUX Action Figure
- 7th Prize: AEON FLUX Action Figure
- 8th Prize: AEON FLUX Action Figure
- 9th Prize: AEON FLUX Action Figure
- 10th Prize: AEON FLUX Action Figure

Contest ends on February 25, 2006.

For more details, visit Robinsons Movieworld Cinema Lobby.

6 STA. ROSA 632-9193 • 632-9199

1 PINK PANTHER	1 PINK PANTHER
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	2 WALK THE LINE
3 SAW 2	3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 CLOSE TO YOU	4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 UNDERWORLD 2	5 SAW 2

7 DASMARINASE 632-9193 • 632-9199

1 PINK PANTHER	1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 WALK THE LINE	3 PINK PANTHER
4 CLOSE TO YOU	4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 UNDERWORLD 2	

8 IMUS 632-9193 • 632-9199

1 PINK PANTHER	1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 UNDERWORLD 2	2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 MUNICH	4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 FIREWALL	5 PINK PANTHER
6 CLOSE TO YOU	6 FIREWALL

9 BACOLOD 632-9193 • 632-9199

1 PINK PANTHER	1 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
2 CLOSE TO YOU	2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 SAW 2	3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE	4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	5 PINK PANTHER
6 BLOODRAYNE	6 SAW 2

10 ILOILO 632-9193 • 632-9199

1 PINK PANTHER	1 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
2 CLOSE TO YOU	2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 SAW 2	3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE	4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	5 PINK PANTHER
6 BLOODRAYNE	6 SAW 2

11 THE PERFECT GIFT 632-9193 • 632-9199

1 PINK PANTHER	1 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
2 CLOSE TO YOU	2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 SAW 2	3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE	4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	5 PINK PANTHER
6 BLOODRAYNE	6 SAW 2

My Funny Valentine!

The Comedy of REX NAVARRETE
SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 10
February 14, 2006, 8:00 PM
North Edsa Cinema 1 February 24 • Southmall Cinema 3 February 25

ERRATUM: We would like to apologize for the inconvenience, we are moving the Feb 17 North Edsa show to Feb 24 and Feb 18 Southmall show to Feb 25. This is to accommodate more people who would like to watch Rex Navarrete. Those who bought the ticket to the Feb 17 and 18 shows will be given FREE popcorn upon presentation of his/her ticket on Feb 24 and 25. Thank you very much for your understanding.

Free LOWER BOX TICKET for every purchase of 1 (one) Rex CD + med. Popcorn & Drink! P 500.00
Free UPPER BOX TICKET for every purchase of 1 (one) med. Popcorn & Drink for P 300.00
Available at the following SM Cinema Snackbars: Megamall, North Edsa, Southmall, and Baguio

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

WE CHEERED FOR PACQUIAO, NOW LET US CHEER FOR VILORIA!

BIG SCREEN! NO COMMERCIALS!

BRIAN VILORIA "THE HAWAIIAN PUNCH" VS JOSE AGUIRRE "EL JAGUAR"
WBC LIGHT FLYWEIGHT CHAMPION

February 19, Sunday
8:00 a.m.
LIVE VIASATELLITE
Las Vegas USA

Watch the Hawaiian Punch defend his WBC title at the following SM cinemas:

Fairview 4176811 • North Edsa 9244274 • Southmall 8056888 • Megamall 8331901
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Iloilo (033) 3209422 Sta. Mesa 7181416 San Lazaro 7862488 • Valenzuela 2933917
Molito (046) 5026487 • Baguio (074) 6197838-39-41

movietime

GUARANTEED SEATS

Nina Beyond Limits
live in concert
with special guest JED MADELA
February 25, 2006
Saturday • 7:00 p.m.
Pampanga Amphitheatre

SM CINEMAS

SM MEGAMALL 1 FIREWALL 2 GOAL 3 AEON FLUX 4 BLOODRAYNE 5 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE 6 PINK PANTHER 7 SAW 2 8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 9 CLOSE TO YOU 10 NEW WORLD 11 SAW 2 12 MUNICH	SM CITY STA. MESA 1 AEON FLUX 2 GOAL 3 PINK PANTHER 4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 5 CLOSE TO YOU 6 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE 7 FIREWALL 8 UNDERWORLD 2 9 NEW WORLD 10 SAW 2	SM CITY SOUTHMALL 1 AEON FLUX 2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 3 PINK PANTHER 4 CLOSE TO YOU 5 FIREWALL 6 GOAL 7 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE 8 NEW WORLD 9 SAW 2 10 RESERVED	SM CITY NORTHMALL 1 AEON FLUX 2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 3 PINK PANTHER 4 FIREWALL 5 BLOODRAYNE 6 CLOSE TO YOU 7 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE 8 UNDERWORLD 2 9 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 10 AEON FLUX 11 PINK PANTHER 12 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE	SM CITY SAN LAZARO 1 AEON FLUX 2 GOAL 3 PINK PANTHER 4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE 5 CLOSE TO YOU 6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 7 WALK THE LINE	SM CITY DASMARINASE 1 BLOODRAYNE 2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 3 CLOSE TO YOU 4 PINK PANTHER 5 BLOODRAYNE 6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 7 DERAILED 8 SM CITY BATANGAS 9 UNDERWORLD 2 10 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 11 CLOSE TO YOU 12 WALK THE LINE	SM CITY BACOLOD 1 PINK PANTHER 2 CLOSE TO YOU 3 SAW 2 4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE 5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 6 BLOODRAYNE	SM CITY ILOILO 1 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 3 UNDERWORLD 2 4 CLOSE TO YOU 5 PINK PANTHER 6 SAW 2	SM CITY CEBU 1 UNDERWORLD 2 2 PINK PANTHER 3 FIREWALL 4 MUNICH 5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 6 BLOODRAYNE 7 CLOSE TO YOU 8 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE	SM CITY CAGAYAN 1 SAW 2 2 RESERVED 3 CLOSE TO YOU 4 PINK PANTHER 5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 6 UNDERWORLD 2 7 RESERVED 8 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE	SM CITY DAVAO 1 CLOSE TO YOU 2 PINK PANTHER 3 SAW 2 4 UNDERWORLD 2 5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 6 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE 7 SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO 8 UNDERWORLD 2 9 RUMOR HAS IT 10 CLOSE TO YOU 11 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
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SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

DID YOU KNOW...

SOME of the pieces worn by Juris of MYMP at the pop group's recently concluded concert ("MYMP's Best—The Repeat") at the Araneta Concert were gifts from TV host and MYMP fan Kris Aquino.

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 PINK PANTHER MTRCB, GP
2 AEON FLUX MTRCB, R-13
3 EIGA SAI 2006 2:00, 5:00, 8:00
4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN MTRCB, R-16

GOAL MTRCB, GP

Catch the Cineplex Special
Get a 10% discount coupon for a Geisha Pampering Scrub from Urban Spa when you buy your "Memoirs of a Geisha" tickets in advance. See posters for details.
Promo period: Feb. 09-22 2006 Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-0139 Series of 2006

Call 633-7881, loc. 171 or 636-2227
433-4736 for more details.

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EASTWOOD CINEMAS

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E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

For inquiries, call: 687-6963

GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	THE MACHINIST
2	PINK PANTHER GP
3	AEON FLUX R-13
4	GOAL

POWER PLANT CINEMAS

Rockwell Center, Makati City Tel. No. 8961488-41

GOAL GP	BROKEBACK R16	AEON FLUX R13
FIREWALL PG13	CLOSE TO YOU	PINK PANTHER GP

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 091-14441

Undeputed champion and other boob-tube boobos

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

HOST: WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST WISH FOR yourself this year?

Guest: That I can find time despite my busy schedule to take a week off and go to the province, so I can visit my town home!
(Ay, balikad yata!)

Host: Were you outstanding in academics even as a young student?

Guest: You might say that. For example, in our school's weekly spelling contest, I became undeputed champion for weeks!
(What in the world is an "undeputed" champion?)

Host: What is a special attraction of your city?

Guest: Proudly, we have one of the longest doll factories in the country!
(That long, huh?)

Host: Do you want to have many children?

Guest: I do. I had a happy childhood, so hindi ako nakat magkaroon ng malaking anak!
(Magkaroon anak? Malaking anak? Make up your mind!)

Host: What do you have to say to your predecessor?

Guest: He should leave our office with his hands clean. He should account for all of the costs that his controversial projects have incurred!
(Occurred? Accrued? Incurred? Ano ba talaga, kaga?)

Host: What do you want to say to your best friend on her birthday?

Guest: I want to say: Sana hindi lahat ng tao, gaya mo!
(So much for best friends!)

Host: Tell us more about yourself.

Guest: For example, what were your parents?
(Humans, we hope!)

Host: How successful was your group's exhibit?

Guest: Well, I notice them that they like the pictures.
(Well, huh...)

Host: Where did you study abroad?

Guest: In Beijing, Germany.
(—As opposed to Berlin, China?)

Host: What do you think of your costar?

Guest: He's so good—when it comes to acting experience, I take my hat to him!
(And, what does he do with it?)

Host: Why did you decide to play a villain in your latest role on TV?

Guest: Frankly, playing leading men too long can be boring. I'm out to prove that I'm not just more than a pretty face!
(Ah, please repeat?)

Host: How did you feel during your first sexy pictorial?

Guest: Ok lang, trabaho lang.
Host: But wasn't it nerve-wracking wearing only bee?
(Don't answer that, please?)

OPENS FEBRUARY 22!

PG-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP

FROM THE ACADEMY AWARD-WINNING FILMMAKERS OF "TRAFFIC"

GEORGE CLOONEY
MATT DAMON
JEFFREY WRIGHT

SYRIANA

2006 FROM NICKSON, MARY, PATTINSON, SHORE, BACKE

SYRIANA: A gripping political thriller that follows the unraveling of a complex web of power and corruption in the oil industry. Clooney, Damon, and Wright deliver powerful performances in this thought-provoking film.

ARANETA CENTER

Gateway MALL Farmers Plaza

THE ONLY CINEPLEX IN THE COUNTRY Gateway Cineplex 10

CLOSE TO YOU	BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 1:20 / 4:10 / 7:00 / 9:50	PINK PANTHER 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45
THE NEW WORLD 12:30 / 3:20	GOAL 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	AEON FLUX 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40
I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50	MUNICH 6:10 / 9:20	FIREWALL

MALL CINEMAS

CLOSE TO YOU	AEON FLUX 12:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 12:10 / 2:20 / 5:15 / 8:05
PINK PANTHER 12:00 / 2:10 / 4:20 / 6:30 / 8:40	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 12:15 / 2:45 / 5:15 / 7:45 / 10:15	

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM

PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE FEB. 15 Wed. 7:30 pm PUREFOODS vs RED BULL
WWE RAW LIVE TOUR FEB. 24 FRI 6 pm & FEB. 25 SAT 4 pm

OPENS TODAY!

MTRCB PG-13 ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED

EVERY DREAM HAS A BEGINNING

GOAL!

Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

2ND RIB-TICKLING FUN WEEK!

MTRCB PG-13 Children below 13 yrs old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

Jim Carrey Téa Leoni

Fun Dick Jane

Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

6 OSCAR NOMINATIONS! THE LOVE STORY BEGINS FEB. 22

MTRCB PG-13 Children below 13 yrs old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA

THE DIRECTOR OF "CHICAGO"

www.SonyPictures.net

Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

BRUCE WILLIS MOS DEF DAVID MORSE

For a New York cop and his witness, the distance between life and death just got very short.

1 WITNESS... 118 MINUTES...

16 BLOCKS



SOON IN THEATERS

[illegible]

THE
MONNIA
OF ALL
COMEDIES
IS BACK

2, 6, 9



OPENS FEBRUARY 22

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE-MALL
NOW SHOWING

1 AEONFLUX R13 **2 GOAL** GP

PROMENADE
NOW SHOWING

3 FIREWALL/ CLOSE TO YOU PG13 **4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN** R13 **5 PINK PANTHER** GP

FOR PRICES & SCHEDULING THE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE, FOR CINEMA SCHEDULE, CALL 722-4444

MUSIC MUSEUM
February 15, 2006
FEBRUARY 17, 2006

LANE 1 AN INMAN
LANE 2 HAWKWOOD
5:00 PM
8:00 PM

TEATRINO NOW OPEN NIGHTLY
FOR RESERVATIONS CALL
722-4532 LOC 116

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL: 721-6726 OR 721-0635

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2006

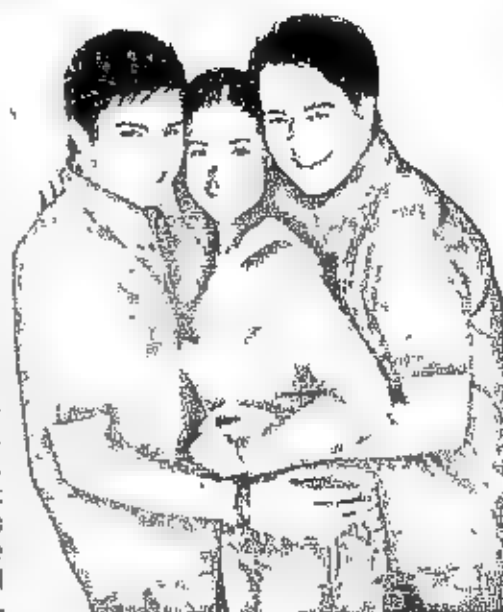
OPENING TODAY

Close to You

Stars John Lloyd Cruz, Bea Alonzo, Sam Milby

Directed by Cathy Garcia Molina

In Star Cinema's second film for this year, Cruz and Alonzo play best friends. Unknown to the girl, her bosom buddy is in love with her. He feels threatened when another childhood friend enters the picture—a Pil-Am band vocalist (Milby). Drumbeaters call this "an irresistible romantic triangle" and claim that the Cruz-Alonzo love team is revitalized by the fact that the pair is put in "amusing situations" in this new film supported by a leading toothpaste company. As a bonus, Milby is making his big-screen debut in this Valentine presentation. To those who've just emerged from a cave, he was a product of "Pinoy B.G. Brother's" first season.

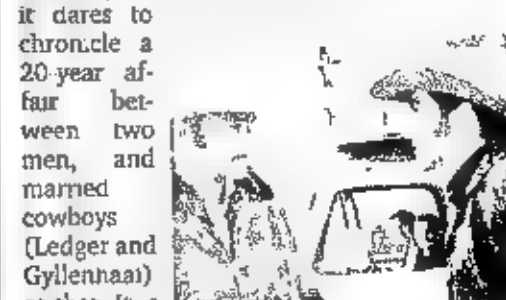


Brokeback Mountain

Stars Heath Ledger, Jake Gyllenhaal, Michelle Williams, Anne Hathaway

Directed by Ang Lee

An award winner in Venice and the Golden Globes and, now, a front runner in the Oscars derby, this "sweeping romance" has been hailed by critics as "groundbreaking" because it dares to chronicle a 20-year affair between two men, and named cowboys (Ledger and Gyllenhaal) at that. It is based on a short story written by Annie Proulx (Pulitzer winner for "The Shipping News") and included in the prestigious O. Henry anthology in 1997. The titular mountain serves as the pair's "love nest, a reckoning place... an island of denial." Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun-Times raves: "Lee is a director whose films are set in many nations and many times. What they have in common is an instinctive sympathy for the characters... [He] respects the entire arc of the story, right down to the lonely conclusion [The] closing scene... is heartbreaking in what is said, and not said, about their world." It's a love, according to Stephen Holden of the New York Times, that is "stumbled into, thwarted and held sorrowfully in the heart."



The Pink Panther



The Pink Panther

Stars Steve Martin, Kevin Kline, Beyoncé Knowles

Directed by Shawn Levy

Martin takes over the Inspector Jacques Cloiseau role made immortal by Peter Sellers. The bumbling French cop is assigned to investigate the murder of a world-famous soccer coach and recover a stunning diamond ring called the "Pink Panther." Hilarity ensues as Cloiseau closes in on the criminal. Brian Lowry of Variety says, "It's neither [a] disaster nor a fully realized madcap farce... a feature-length 'Saturday Night Live' sketch." Michael Rechtshaffen of the Hollywood Reporter thinks "there's a stale, warmed-over feel to the entire production... [it] fails to generate the necessary comic sparks. Too many gags fall flat on their face long before the inspector does and the entire pace feels like it's on some sort of three-second delay."

Aeon Flux

Stars Charlize Theron, Frances McDormand, Pete Postlethwaite

Directed by Karyn Kusama

Based on a trippy MTV animated series, this girl-power flick is set in the year 2415, four years after a deadly virus wiped out 99 percent of humanity. The surviving one percent relocates to the "pristine walled-in city of Bregna—a dubious paradise." Heroine Aeon (Theron) is a Spandex-clad assassin who sides with rebels and attempts to murder Bregna's leader, to avenge her sister's death. Bob Longino of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution complains: "Aeon Flux" is as enjoyable as acid reflux." Mark Collette of the Tyler Morning Telegraph finds it "entertaining in its own right... more stylish than 'The Island.'"

Goal!

Stars Kuno Becker, Stephen Dillane, Anna Friel

Directed by Danny Cannon

Envisioned as the first part of a trilogy (and, OPENING/A2-5



in a and movie



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Promo period is from February 12 to March 6, 2006.
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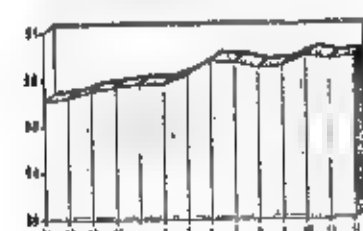
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Computer Magazine
in the Philippines

Coco-based exports jumped 14.6% in '05

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



JANUARY FEBRUARY

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 51.52 = \$

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 14, 2006

Y 117.29 = \$1

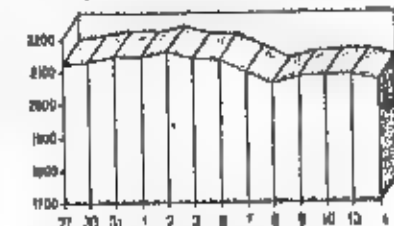
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 14, 2006

GOLD: \$539.00-\$539.50

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 14, 2006

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.85 percent lower yesterday, following losses on Wall Street overnight amid a bout of nerves about the outlook for US interest rates, dealers said.

They said weaker regional markets further dampened sentiment as investors waited to hear the first congressional testimony from new US Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke later this week for a lead on monetary policy.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 17.75 points to 2,089.89 after trading between 2,061.52 and 2,087.64. Volume was 1.67 billion shares worth P8.97 billion.

The all-shares index fell 7.10 points to 970.47.

Losers led gainers at 65 to 12, with 52 stocks unchanged.

"The whole of Asia is consolidating after a strong performance in January. It is trying to seek a lower base as most stocks are now historically expensive," said Nestor Aquila of DA Market Securities Inc.

"Even the recent upgrade in our ratings outlook would not trigger investors to aggressively position in the market today," Aquila said, referring to Fitch Ratings' an-

SHARES/B3

December performance very impressive, says industry group

By Ronnel W. Domingo

EXPORT VOLUMES OF COCONUT-BASED PRODUCTS went up 14.6 percent in 2005 to 2.05 million metric tons owing to double-digit growth rates in all categories but one, according to an industry report.

The United Coconut Associations of the Philippines said last year's shipments increased from 1.79 million MT in copra terms posted in 2004.

Ucap documents showed that exporters shipped out 1.1 million MT of coconut oil, 419,055 MT of copra meal, 117,728 MT of desiccated coconut, and 122,411 MT copra equivalent of oleochemicals.

The numbers mean that last year, shipments of coconut oil grew by 14.9 percent, copra meal by 15 percent, desiccated coconut by 11 percent and oleochemicals by 15.9 percent.

Ucap added that the country did not export any copra this year but was able to sell 38 MT last year.

Still, the group said the overall growth rate of export volumes was largely on account of coconut oil, which performed well espe-

cially in the latter part of the year.

On the other hand, desiccated coconut was the only loser with shipments of 7,207 MT falling behind significantly by 27.2 percent from 9,893 MT. The volume was the smallest delivered in a month during the year.

In December, coconut exports reached 213,636 MT in copra terms or an increase of 97.2 percent from the 103,327 MT shipped out in the same month of 2004.

"(December's) performance was the most impressive during the year when monthly figures were compared with corresponding year-ago levels," Ucap said.

Coconut oil exports increased in December by 120 percent to 120,286 MT from 54,693 MT.

Also, export volumes of oleochemicals went up 87.1 percent

COCO-BASED/B5

Yield of 10-year bonds slides to 8.957%

By Michelle Y. Remo

RENEWED OPTIMISM ON THE GOVERNMENT'S fiscal condition led investors to scramble for the government's 10-year treasury bonds, forcing its rate to drop by 22.5 basis points to 8.957 percent yesterday.

The rate for the 10-year bonds last stood at 9.182 percent during the auction last Jan. 10.

"What's interesting is that with all the affirmation (by credit rating agencies on the Philippines' improving fiscal standing) the market continues to bring down interest rates," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said in press briefing after the auctions.

The market showed strong appetite for the

YIELD/B5

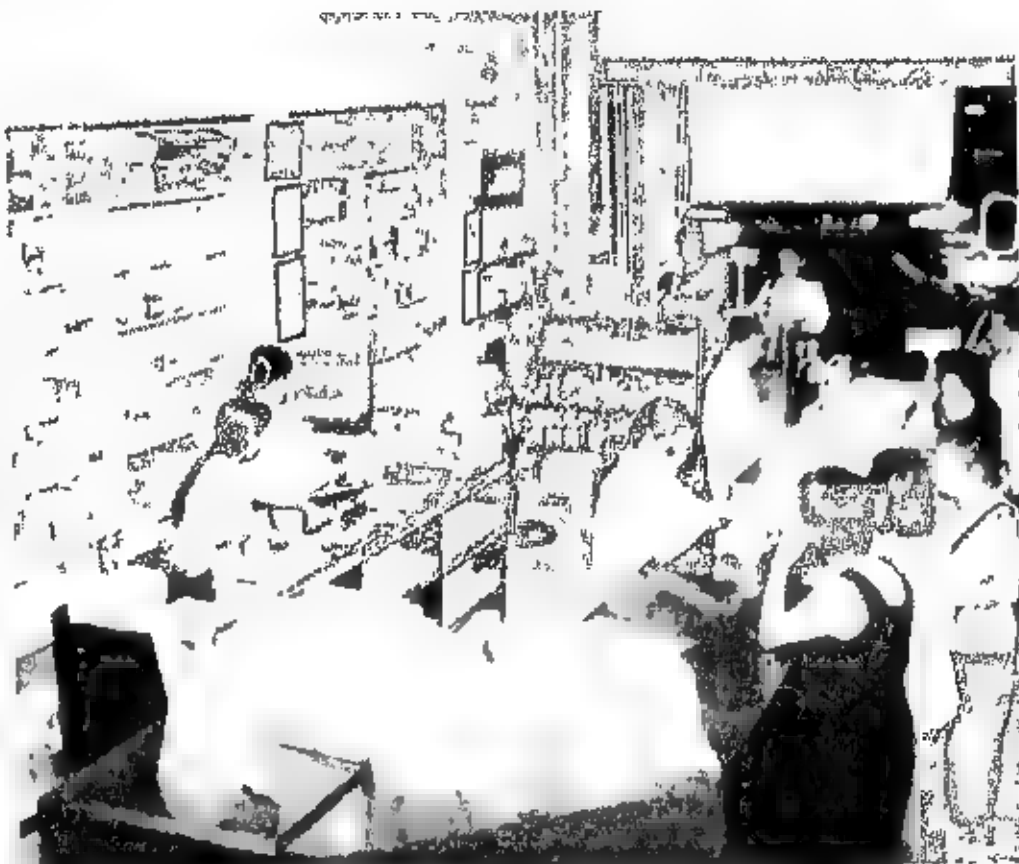
WHAT'S INSIDE



Asian Spirit fills Laoag void /B5

State bank expects '06 profit to hit P3.4-3.5B /B2

Canada firms eye RP investment /B10



SOME lawmakers, regulators, and industry players are now pushing to amend local laws to help bring down the prices of medicine.

MDA PHOTO

Debate on cheaper drugs rages amid high cost of healthcare

By Daxim L. Lucas

(First of two parts)

"THE COMMON ASSERTION IS THAT PRESCRIPTION drugs are costly because drug companies need to recover the high costs of research and development (R&D) that went into the development."

"The industry has used a figure of \$800 million as the average cost of bringing a pharmaceutical compound through screening, chemistry, preclinical development and clinical testing."

"It's a fallacy to suggest that [the pharmaceutical industry], or any industry, prices a product to recapture the R&D budget spent in development. Business doesn't work like that. Those are sunk costs. In other words, [pharmaceutical firms] spent the money and it cannot be recovered no matter what [they] decide to do with pricing."

The preceding paragraphs may sound like the comments of an activist raving against the "oppressive" pricing practices of an "abusive" pharmaceutical industry.

Surprisingly, however, these are the very words of Pfizer Inc. chair and CEO Hank McK-

inney—a leading light in the global pharmaceutical industry—in his book "A Call to Action: Taking Back Healthcare for Future Generations" published only in May 2005.

Intellectual property vs public health

Multinational pharmaceutical firms and their local representatives have always argued that high R&D costs associated with developing medicines justify their high pricing regime.

They argue that the high prices are not predatory in nature, but merely allow the companies' stakeholders to recover the investments they made into developing these life-saving drugs.

On the other hand, advocacy groups critical of the industry argue that pharmaceutical firms are benefiting unduly from the misery of impoverished Filipinos, many of whom pay through the nose for medication that these same firms make available abroad at lower prices.

The debate has pitted the interests of multinational drug firms, which want to protect their intellectual property rights and patents,

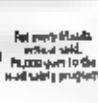
DEBATE/B2



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Gov't raises Customs' revenue collection target for this year.

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT HAS INCREASED the Bureau of Customs' revenue target for this year to P196 billion from the original goal of P191.5 billion.

The move was a consequence of a recent decision that allowed collecting agencies to include non-cash payments in the computation of their revenue collection.

A source from the Department of Finance, head agency of the BOC, said the original target did

not take into account non-cash duty payments that the BOC might collect.

DOF and the Department of Budget and Management officials earlier said that effective this year, the government would already include non-cash duty and tax collections of the BOC and the

Bureau of Internal Revenue in the computation of their revenue collections.

The move is intended to make the Philippines' fiscal reporting system consistent with international standards. Finance and budget officials said the accrual system of accounting, which re-

quired the inclusion of non-cash collections in the computation of revenues, was recommended by the International Monetary Fund and is practiced by neighboring countries.

The BOC last year collected P154.4 billion, surpassing its P151.2-billion target. Of the

amount, P12.746 billion was in the form of non-cash.

The source said the DOF was still studying whether the BIR's target of P675.4 billion for this year should also be increased. The BIR is lobbying for its target to be maintained, saying it was already high.

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State bank expects '06 profit to hit P3.4-3.5B

Expanding scope, scale of operations

By Doris C. Dumlaog

STATE-OWNED DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Philippines will expand both the scope and scale of its lending operations this year to be able to realize P3.4 billion to P3.5 billion in profit.

The bank last year posted a net income of P3.2 billion.

"Priority in the years ahead is to generate scale in all our activities—it's the ability to grow the book. We have to make sure we have adequate scale to remain strategic, relevant and true to our charter. Our developmental side should shift to higher gear this year," DBP president Reynaldo David said in a briefing yesterday.

Lending to local government units, for instance, will remain a key focus with greater emphasis on housing projects, public hospitals, public markets, public schools, bus terminals and LGU computerization programs, he said.

Widening its business scope



DAVID

means making inroads into new areas such as microfinance and small and medium enterprise lending.

In the meantime, DBP got the regulators go-ahead for its plan to raise as much as P10 billion in tier 2 capital.

It recently raised P2.35 billion in

fresh funds from the first tranche of a tier 2 capital notes offering.

DBP's profit last year was 41.41 percent better than the year-ago level.

David noted a 15.25-percent rise in gross income at P16.7 billion from P14.6 billion a year earlier. Gross loan portfolio registered a 31.26 percent rise to reach P111.53 billion, from P84.97 billion in the previous year.

The bank's past due ratio was recorded at 7.43 percent versus the industry's average of 10.25 percent.

Total assets stood at P210.5 billion or 33.98 percent better than a year ago, while net worth also expanded by 15.11 percent to P22.85 billion.

With P54.22 billion in total funds from official development assistance sources, David said the DBP was in position to sustain relevant lending programs that would benefit the domestic economy.

PPA to float P2B worth of 7-yr notes

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY yesterday said it would sell P2 billion worth of seven-year bonds in the second quarter to raise funds for the upgrading of major ports in key provinces.

PPA assistant general manager Aida Dizon said the bond sale was approved by the port regulator's board last week. The borrowing will be handled by Development Bank of the Philippines.

"We still have to sit down with the DBP and the Bureau of Treasury to finalize the terms and the documentation of the fund raising activity," said Dizon, who also heads the PPA's finance group.

The PPA official said the borrowing would incur an interest charge of 1 to 1.5 percentage points above the benchmark treasury bill rate.

The maritime authority said proceeds of the bond sale will finance the upgrade of ports in Cagayan de Oro, Davao, General Santos, Iloilo, Osamis and Zamboanga.

Debate on cheaper drugs rages amid high cost of healthcare

From page B1

versus the interests of the broader public, which is clamoring for more affordable healthcare.

At stake is the future of the country's P65-billion pharmaceutical industry, and more importantly, the health of millions of impoverished Filipinos, many of whom can barely afford to make ends meet, much less spend for medication when they get sick.

So far, however, the battle has been one-sided, with local drug prices still among the most expensive in the region, and some claim, in the world—mainly because the local system continues to prioritize the protection of foreign firm's intellectual property rights over making drugs more affordable.

For example, a 500 mg capsule of Ponstan (generic name: mefenamic acid) costs as much as P20.98 in local drugstores. In India and Pakistan, however, where state policies are more egalitarian, the same medication would cost only the equivalent of P2.80 and P1.48 a capsule, respectively.

Government intervention

With this in mind, some lawmakers, regulators, and industry players are now pushing to amend local laws to help bring down the prices of medicine.

Recently, Senate trade and commerce committee chair Manuel A. Roxas II filed Senate Bill No. 2139, which aims to lower drug or medicine prices by amending provisions of the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines.

Supported by Sen. Juan M. Flavier, the bill has gathered a significant amount of support from local regulators and industry groups, but is being opposed by the influential Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), an umbrella organization dominated by multinational drug makers.

The salient features of the bill include institutionalizing the following:

- Parallel importation—The importation of patented medicines from another country where they are cheaper into the Philippines. At present, the state-owned Philippine International Trading Corp. (PITC) can only import "off patent" medicines from abroad. Even if these are off patent, PITC is still being sued for infringement by foreign pharmaceutical companies.

- Early working doctrine—This will allow local generic drug manufacturers to start studying and testing of generic equivalents of patented drugs before the expiration of the relevant patent. Only commercial manufacturing and selling are prohibited. This principle is applied in the United States and is recognized in Japan, Canada, Israel and Thailand. At present, local generic manufacturers are allowed to start studying, testing, manufacturing and selling of generic equivalents only after a patent has expired. The period of studying and testing alone takes approximately two to three years, and thus, delays the introduction of generic medicines beyond the date when a patent expires.

- Government use—This will create an exception to the application of compulsory licensing rules for cases involving the protection of public health, like outbreaks or epidemics. Based on present laws, compulsory licensing applications take around six to eight years before approval. Hence, any government action is unnecessarily delayed.

- Legal protection for government officials—There is also a need to create a legal indemnity clause for government officials engaged in parallel importation and compulsory licensing for government use. This will ensure appropriate legal cover from harassment suits or temporary restraining orders.

Debate rages

In his book, the head of the world's biggest pharmaceutical firm argues that "sunk costs" like R&D spending are "irrelevant" for drug pricing considerations.

"If we let sunk costs influence our decisions, we would not be evaluating a pricing decision exclusively on the merits of its own business case," Pfizer's McKinnell wrote. "Pricing decisions should be based on future possibilities, not biased by 10-year-old decisions."

White the Pfizer chief justified the pharmaceutical industry's policies, he himself shot holes in the argument most commonly used by drug firms in defending their high prices, even as he stressed that prices need to come down to make health care more affordable.

Proponents of SB 2139—and millions of Filipino consumers—couldn't agree more. (To be continued)

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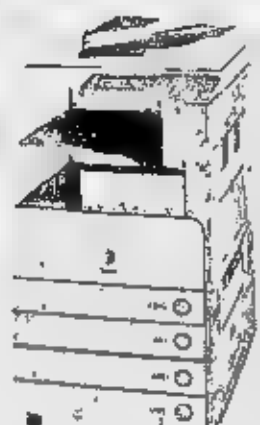
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Asian Spirit fills Laoag void

ASIAN SPIRIT IS JUMPING INTO THE VOID left by the Philippine Airlines' cancellation of Laoag flights.

The country's third biggest carrier will start fielding a four-times-a-week flight to the Ilocos Norte capital starting Tuesday, Feb. 21, said Asian Spirit chair Noel Ofiate.

Asian Spirit is also undercutting PAL, charging P6,400 for the Manila-Laoag roundtrip, instead of the P6,900 the Lucio Tan carrier used to charge before abruptly stopping flights last Monday.

Asian Spirit will be using its new BAe 146, a 100-seater jet. PAL used the 150-seater Airbus A320. PAL cancelled its Laoag flights when its ground crew balked at reporting for work after a staff member was allegedly bullied by former Mayor Rodolfo Parinas. The mayor has denied this.

Asian Spirit's new sales agent and franchisee for the Laoag route happens to be Bonito Singson, a younger brother of Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

The Singsons are political allies of Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who is opposed to Parinas. Asian Spirit's Laoag flight leaves the Manila domestic airport at 10 a.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Mondays, and turns around for Manila at 11:30 a.m. on the same days.

Oca's razor

THERE has to be a simpler explanation why La Salle Greenhills president Bernard Oca would rather resort to using ACCRA as front

COCKTALES



Victor C. Agustin

men instead of him meeting the parents of a bully victim himself.

What is more puzzling than the school's hiring of top litigators is that, even before this legal dodge, the assistant grade school principal had already taken it upon himself to investigate the bullying incidents, which include allegations of cell phone- and allowance-theft and—this one is an adult crime—check forgery.

Stranger still, the assistant principal borrowed, and then lost, the bully's handwritten confession/apology to the victim's parents.

Even more puzzling, the principal, Evangelina Tamaca, expressed surprise on hearing the complaints and the hush-hush investigation already conducted by her male assistant when the parents finally went to see her in November.

The parents visited the Greenhills school last Nov. 8 but it formed a review board only on Jan. 27, after the frantic parents again complained that the bully—a 15-year-old, 5'8", 150-lb tawondo practitioner—again delivered some body blows at their quaking 13-year-old, 4'11", 100-lb son. The son's crime? Squealing, according to the bully.

Other than the latest assault, the victim had

been ambushed in the bathroom so many times before that his father, a foreigner, wondered what makes the teenager, a class repeater, so dear to the La Salle brothers.

"The school is firmly committed to observing the right to due process," ACCRA explained when the parents wrote to Oca last week complaining of the investigative gridlock.

"If you have any evidence in your possession ... then you are certainly welcome to extend your cooperation."

Money-go-round

• MALACANANG has sounded off Namfrel counsel Jose "Bong" Bernas and former Rizal Rep. Egnudio "Ding" Tanjuatco for two of three board vacancies in the Commission on Elections.

• The shortlist of candidates for the presidency of the Asian Institute of Management, vice the retiring Roberto de Ocampo, includes AIM trustee Francis Estrada, Ramcar president Roberto Garcia, DBP chair Vitaliano Nafias II and former Metro Pacific president Ricardo Pascua.

Heard through the grapevine

THE Bases Conversion Development Authority has given the all-clear signal for next month's opening of the Thunderbird casino-resort in Poro Point, despite the last-minute hurdles posed, ironically, by Poro Point Management Corp. chair Filodelfo Roxas.

(Email: cocktails_pdi@pdiatd.net or cocktails_pdi@yahoo.com)

Coco-based ...

From page B1

to 11,563 MT from 6,1790 MT while those of copra meal went up by 34.8 percent to 42,210 MT from 31,323 MT.

However, December volumes of desiccated coconut shrank by 27.2 percent to 7,207 MT from 9,893 MT, which was the smallest volume delivered for a month in the entire year.

The United States cornered 47.8 percent or 57,516 MT of all coconut oil shipments from the country in December while 37.3 percent or 44,920 MT went to the European market.

Other shipments went to Malaysia with 8,000 MT, Japan with 4,850 MT, Korea with 3,000 MT and Indonesia with 2,000 MT.

Shares close lower

From page B1

nouncement on Monday.

While most blue chip companies have been reporting strong profits for the past year, investors are not sure the momentum can be sustained amid higher taxes and rising business costs, said

Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities.

"Investors are sort of cautious on equity investments in the region given concerns on valuations and the earnings outlook," Vistan said.

AFP

Yield of 10-year ...

From page B1

10-year bonds. Volume of bids reached P8.6 billion, making the government securities oversubscribed. The government has programmed and accepted P4 billion worth of borrowings through the 10-year bonds.

Cruz said the volume of bids for the 10-year bonds reflected investor confidence in the government's long-term fiscal prospects.

The drop in the interest rate for the 10-year bonds followed the decline in all treasury bill yields last Monday. The benchmark 91-day treasury bill rate fell by a basis point to 5.087 percent, while the 182- and 364-day bills fetched lower rates of 6.168 percent and 7.24 percent, respectively.

The declining interest rates were attributed to the announce-

ment by Fitch Ratings last Monday and by Standard and Poor's last week that they had revised their outlook on the Philippines from "negative" to "stable."

This left only Moody's Investors Service having a "negative" outlook on the Philippines among the three major international credit-rating firms.

Fitch and S&P said they took into account the Philippine government's improving fiscal position in their decision to change their outlook on the country.

Last year, the government budget deficit dropped to P146.5 billion, or much lower than the official ceiling of P180 billion set by fiscal authorities. With the expected revenues from a higher VAT rate, the government expects its deficit to further decline to P125 billion this year.

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OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of The Tenth Death Anniversary of ATTY. MAURINO "URING" R. SOBREPENA

of San Jose City, Nueva Ecija
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His loving wife, ONOR, children, JOE and MERLY FAIGIANI, FRANK and AJ ICE FERINA, GUY and MARY SOBREPENA, CHITO and ANNA SOBREPENA, RINO SOBREPENA and DAN and LEAH JOSLIN, grandchildren and relatives request the pious readers to pray for his soul.

Masses will be celebrated today at the:

St. Joseph Cathedral, San Jose City 6:00 A.M.
 Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows 7:00 A.M.
 Shrine of the Two Hearts, San Jose City 6:00 A.M.
 Mary Help of Christian Church, San Jose City 6:00 P.M.
 St. Edward the Confessor Church Feb. 19, 2006
 New Fairfield, Connecticut, U.S.A 7:30 A.M.

Dr. BENEDICTO P. RIVERA, MD

Professor III, University of Sto. Tomas College of Medicine & Surgery
 Fellow, International College of Surgeon
 Fellow, Philippine College of Surgeon

Peacefully joined his Creator
 on February 12, 2006 at the age of 78.

His loving wife Telly; children Leah, Bing and Sonny, Christine, Junle, Robert, S.J., Noel and Bechie, Josephine (1), Christian and grandchildren, Rhia, Dindin, Beatrice and Harley request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Friday, February 17, 2006 at the Loyola Memorial Park after the 9:00 a.m. Mass which will be held at the UST Chapel.

Orlando "Orling" Quinto Mendoza

of San Agustin, Lubao, Pampanga

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 12, 2006 at 5:30 a.m.

He will be missed by his brothers and sisters
 Mr. & Mrs. Telesforo Q. Mendoza, Dr. Romeo Q. Mendoza,
 Ms. Tessie Q. Mendoza, Mr. & Mrs. Loreto Q. Mendoza,
 Mr. & Mrs. Dominador M. de Leon, Mr. & Mrs. Carmelino Q. Mendoza, Mr. & Mrs. Honorio Q. Mendoza,
 Ms. Babes M. Tolud, Mr. & Mrs. Ricardo L. Crescino Jr. (Australia),
 nephews, nieces, relatives & friends. We request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie at his residence San Agustin, Lubao, Pampanga.

Interment will be tomorrow, February 16, 2006 at the Lubao Memorial Park after the 2:00 o'clock p.m. Mass.

LIM SAY

AKA CHUA FUG of Atimonan, Quezon

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 11, 2006 at the age of 96

His bereaved wife Charing Tan; children, grandchildren and great grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Rizal Funeral Homes, Inc., Libertad, Pasay City, where mass will be held at 7:00 p.m. every night. Interment will be at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City tomorrow, February 16, 2006 at 8:00 a.m.

RUBY KELLEY MANGAHAS

May 27, 1916 - February 3, 2006

Peacefully passed away in the Grace of our Lord
 in Stockton, California at the age of 89.

Her sons, Mahar, Rabel, Fred Bonny and their families; nieces and nephews, other relatives and friends request your prayer for the eternal repose of her soul.

She will lie in state at the Church of the Risen Lord in the University of the Philippines campus, Diliman, Quezon City. A musical tribute in her honor will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, February 17, 2006 at the Nicanor Abelardo Hall of the U.P. College of Music.

Interment will be at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City on Saturday, February 18, 2006 after the 8:00 a.m. Christian services at the Church of the Risen Lord.

ENGINEER/ARCHITECT RODOLFO CAMAQUIN VIDAD

Vice-President & Treasurer

Died in the Grace of our Lord on February 13, 2006 at the age of 78.

With a deep sense of loss,

The Board of Directors, Stockholders and Employees of

AGVID CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.

condole with his entire family and request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz,
 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on February 16, 2006, 3:00 p.m.,
 at Himlayang Pilipino, Quezon City,
 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

"...absent
 from the
 body
 to be
 present
 with the
 Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:8

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Matthew 11:28

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Manolo S. Camero	Chapel B-5, Q.C.	Feb. 15, 2006 9:00 AM	North Cemetery
CNN Brian Constantino	Chapel C-12, Q.C.	Feb. 16, 2006 9:00 AM	Chilena Cemetery

CLASSIFIEDS

ANOTHER YEAR FOR PMAP & CHINATRUST PARTNERSHIP

Chinatrust (Philippines) Commercial Bank Corp. recently signed Memo of Agreement with PMAP as 2006 PMAP Partner led by its leaders (center) Chinatrust's president Mr. Joey Bermudez and PMAP's president, Atty. Rico De Guzman. Witnessing the signing are Ms. Jo Natividad, Chinatrust senior VP for Marketing, Ms. Dobbie Cantano, PMAP treasurer, Mr. Tony Robles, Chinatrust EVP for Retail Banking and Ms. Imae Cantano, PMAP vice president.



The Beta Epsilon Fraternity
 of the U.P. College of
 Engineering joins the
 bereaved family of

Prof. Dominador Ibarra Ilio, BE 1937
 BSCE 1939, BSGE 1939, MSCE

in mourning the loss of a brother, teacher, engineer, poet,
 writer, painter, WWII guerilla, and friend.

"Prof" passed away peacefully at the age of 92, last
 February 7, 2006, in his hometown Malinao, Aklan.

Interment will be on February 18, 2006 after the 8:00 A.M.
 mass in Malinao.

A Memorial Mass and Necrological Service will be held on
 February 21, 6:00 p.m. at the College of Engineering Theater,
 Melchor Hall, U.P. Diliman, Quezon City.

"I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me
 will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me
 will never die." John 11:25-26

MOTORIZING

Text us your feedback: inquirer motoring@inquirer.com.ph or 283 (Sms)

New Galant to face off vs Camry, Accord

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE THREE-DIAMOND LOGO car company, which is determined to leave its woes behind as the maker of Eclipse (an enthusiast's favorite, particularly in the United States) and the iconic "Evo" (cult status achiever in the high-performance sedan category), launches the all new Galant 240M.

The Galant, Mitsubishi's European-inspired sedan, is an exclusive design by Mercedes-Benz's former chief designer Oliver Boulay. It is one of Boulay's last projects with Mitsubishi.

Aggressive product offensive

It has been seen that the Galant 240M signals the start of an aggressive product offensive for Mitsubishi in 2006. The Galant 240M (with the same engine as the Mitsubishi Grandis' 2.4-liter Mivec engine) will compete with the two most

popular full-sized sedans in the market: the 2.4-liter Toyota Camry (which has two variants in the 2.4-liter, and one 3-liter variant) and Honda Accord (which has a 2.4- and 3-liter variants).

In the United States, the Galant offers a 3.8-liter V6 aside from its 2.4-liter engine. Asked why Mitsubishi did not offer the V6 variant in the Philippines, Froilan Dytanquin, assistant vice president for marketing, said the V6 market did not offer sustained demands in the long run.

Introductory sales strong

He observed that the introductory sales of 3-liter sedans were initially strong but the sustaining sales turned out small. "There's still more sales volume in the 2.4 category," he said. Dytanquin stressed that the small sustaining volume in the three-liter category is due to the rising fuel cost.

Wider and longer than the Camry and

the Accord (but lower than the Camry, with its aerodynamic considerations), the Galant is bigger in every aspect than its predecessor, measuring 4885mm long (Accord at 4831mm; Camry at 4815mm), 1840mm wide (Accord at 1821mm, Camry at 1795mm) and 1,480mm high (Accord at 1455mm; Camry at 1515mm). Its cabin room length of 1997mm boasts of being the most spacious in its class with more leg room for its passengers.

The wheelbase in mm are 2750 (Galant) 2738 (Accord) 2720 (Camry)

From China Motors

Known as the Mitsubishi Grunder in Taiwan, the Galant 240M came from China Motors Corp. assembled exclusively in Taiwan for left-hand-drive countries in Southeast Asia. Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Inc. has initially imported 50 units.

The 2.4-liter engine is a 4G69 Mit-



GALANT 240M

subaru Valve timing and lift Electronic Control System (Mivec) engine. Mivec engines are known for maximizing fuel efficiency, torque and low-end pickup while minimizing exhaust emissions.

The engine is mated to a 4-speed Invecs II automatic transmission with Sportronic. (Invecs II intelligent and innovative vehicle electronic control system with two control programs).

It has an all-wheel independent suspension system with MacPherson struts with stabilizer bars up front and multi-link with stabilizer bars at the rear to help reduce understeer and improve cornering stability.

nering stability.

It has four-wheel disc brakes, tandem brake boosters, monitored by the four-sensor, 3-channel ABS with electronic brakeforce distribution that prevents locking (to remain steerable during emergency braking). It also has reinforced impact safety evolution.

With a three-year or 100,000 km warranty, the Galant has an introductory price of P1,548,000. Camry is priced at P1,558 million (2.4V), P1,37 million (2.4E) and P1,762 million (3.0E) while Accord's new SRP with 12 percent VAT is P1,428 million for the 2.4 liter and P1,663 million for the 3 liter.

FIA official arriving for AAP celebration

MAX MOSELEY, PRESIDENT OF THE Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the Paris-based governing body for motor sports worldwide, has designated FIA Secretary General Peter Doggweiler to attend the grand 75th anniversary celebration of Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) this May.

AAP is the country's first auto club and, being the only motoring organization in the

Philippines accredited by the FIA, officiates all motor sport activities in the country and issues competition licenses to race drivers aside from organizing permits.

Corollary to this, one of the AAP Diamond Anniversary events that Doggweiler will attend is the launch of Fast Lane, a coffee table book on Philippine motor sports history and personalities, replete with pictures. Fast Lane is one of the anniversary projects of AAP's motor sports committee which is chaired by Mandy Eduque, one of several AAP directors (the others are AAP president Gus Lagman and VP Johnny Angeles) who were race drivers in their youth.

Motor sports

The other AAP anniversary activities that Doggweiler will surely enjoy attending are the motor sport events. Aside from the annual Sampaguita Rally, which is slated for April 22 as a precursor to anniversary week, a karting competition will be held on Sunday, May 14, at the Kart Trak, Boom Grounds on Roxas Boulevard. A rally cross, slalom or 4 x 4 event is also planned. Appropriately enough, the Diamond Anniversary Week will be capped by the Philippine Motor Sport Awards Dinner hosted annually by AAP.

AAP joined the FIA in 1951 when it was still known as the Philippine Motor Association. AAP has also been affiliated for over 50 years with the Alliance Internationale de Tourisme

ON THE ROAD



Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

Fast Lane is one of the anniversary projects of AAP's motor sports committee

(AIT), which is based in Geneva and was recently merged with the FIA.

Touring, in fact, is one of the Seven Mandates of AAP aside from motor sports. The national auto club strives to provide its members (currently 60,000 in number) and the motoring public with information on road conditions, travel accommodations and tourist attractions, thereby promoting domestic tourism.

Tourism support

Small wonder that the Department of Tourism is supporting AAP's Diamond Anniversary by including its activities in the DoT website and extending VIP airport reception and assistance to the FIA secretary general and members from other FIA-affiliated Asian auto clubs traveling to Manila for AAP's 75th anniversary golf tournament.

Aside from tracing the development of motor sports in the Philippines via a coffee table book, AAP will also highlight the development of the automotive industry via a Vintage Car Parade and an Auto Show from May 12, Friday, until May 14, Sunday, at The Forum, PICC displaying the oldest and latest models of major car manufacturers. AAP after all, is the national auto club and you cannot be a member unless you are a motorist, if not a car lover.

It is the Club's good luck that AAP director Ronald Reidenbach, chair of the AAP Diamond

Anniversary committee, is also president emeritus of the Vintage Car Club. The anniversary week kicks off with a Vintage Car Parade along Roxas Boulevard on Sunday morning, May 7, that should attract car collectors and car enthusiasts.

Road safety

Prior to all these, AAP's mission to promote road safety takes center stage with the fourth of a series of six conferences on road safety organized by AAP and the University of the Philippines National Center for Transportation Studies with Toyota Motor Corp. Philippines as sponsor. AAP plans to launch a pilot Road Safety Zone at the UP Diliman campus during the Diamond Anniversary week. A conference on alternative fuels is also being planned.

AAP members, naturally, stand to enjoy most the 75th anniversary observance of the Club. The annual AAP general membership meeting on May 11 will be an extra special one with all the funs and hoopla befitting a Diamond Anniversary celebration, including a greater number of raffle prizes.

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: I don't approve of political jokes—I've seen too many of them get elected.

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph

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A history, a worship of heat

IT IS VERY DIFFICULT NOT TO TALK ABOUT the topic of love these days; the coqs of business and advertising have begun to spool in preparation for another billion dollar payday on the 14th. Who can blame them? The human emotions associated with attraction are quite irrepressible and rather decisive in nature—hence the undivided attention of the greeting card companies, florists and motels.

While I'm certain my colleagues in the print media are going to fill their allotted spaces with "woony and winning" stories, the confines of this column will focus on a love that is distant, unrequited, insanely passionate and very, very personal. While I am attracted to cars in general like any normal octane-blooded petrol head, my heart belongs, wholly and irrevocably, to the unassuming hatchback. Worse still is my long standing devotion to those hatchbacks that display enough dynamic heat to be labeled as truly blistering.

History of the genre

What makes a hot hatch ever so desirable? Is this something that can be attributed to a single factor, like power or handling? We must look at the rather extensive history of the genre, a veritable who's who of the best money for speed in the last 30 years or so.

We have to look back to June 1976 for the recognized pioneer and spiritual forebear of this entertaining segment. There cannot be a better start to this narrative than the Mk1 Volkswagen Golf GTi. Take a sweet handling, lightweight chassis and power it with an ample amount of engine; this Golf came with a factory 1.6-liter with a then whopping 108 bhp. Success of this experiment in "blue collar speed" (a term used to describe the value for money drive quality of these cheap pocket rockets), then spread like wildfire.

Included in the first batch of hot hatch manufacturers are the marquee of Renault, Vauxhall/Opel and Ford. Cars like the Peugeot 205 GTi, the Renault 5 GT Turbo as well as the Ford Escort XR3i are excellent specimens born of this "power to the masses" movement. Ten years into the phenomenon and another icon is born of the manufacturing race for more heat; Ford's 1986 Escort RS Turbo now comes stock with 130 bhp with tuners often extracting well over 200-bhp from these cars.

More familiar image

A vehicle that is a more familiar image in the Filipino hot hatch consciousness is the 1997-on Honda Civic Type R. Though initially unavailable in the local market, the images of these real world speedsters came over the In-

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma



ternet and foreign publications. Factory supplied with a 185-bhp 1.6-liter, in the form of the B16B screamer, the tweaked suspension along with the boy racer good looks more than helped ensure the classic status of these Championship White colored bolts of lightning.

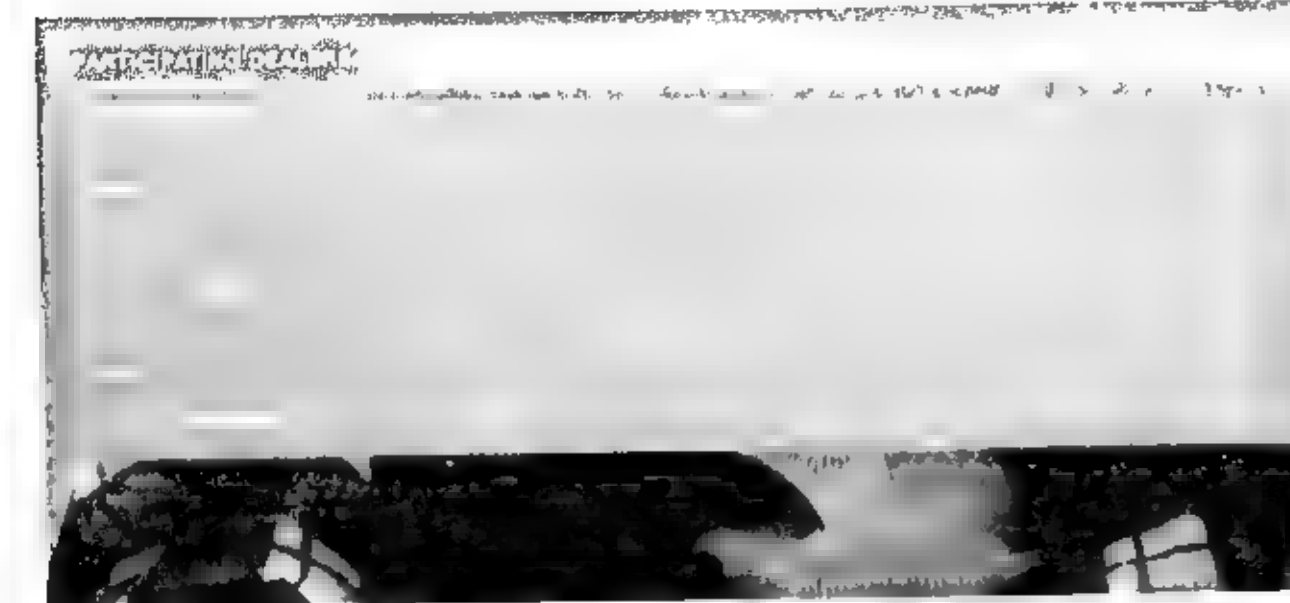
The definitive expressions of these types of vehicles have obviously come from the realm motorsport, especially from the lethal Group B formula of the World Rally Championships. We cannot talk of these fire-breathing widow makers without talking of the cars from Lancia. They took a then rare 185-bhp Delta HF Turbo 4x4 and went properly wild with their imaginations, engineering abilities and marketing budgets. The first in the developmental history of this mental vehicle was the Evoluzione specification, now 215-bhp from a two-liter block.

Then in a moment that is debatably borne of either genius or sheer madness, the monster Group B integrale was conceived. The sheer numbers involved are insane, 450-bhp from a two-liter, four-pot unimaginably blown by both a supercharger and a turbocharger. With foot-long flames sprouting from this rally car during every downshift. It can be said that this is a car that literally burned and branded itself into the imagination of many a car enthused youth of the '80s.

New wave

Thirty years on and the world market is once again inundated with a new wave of these cars. More than a dozen manufacturers produce a hot hatch in some form or the other, ranging from the original pioneers in Europe to even brands like Kia (with their 280-bhp, AWD Sport).

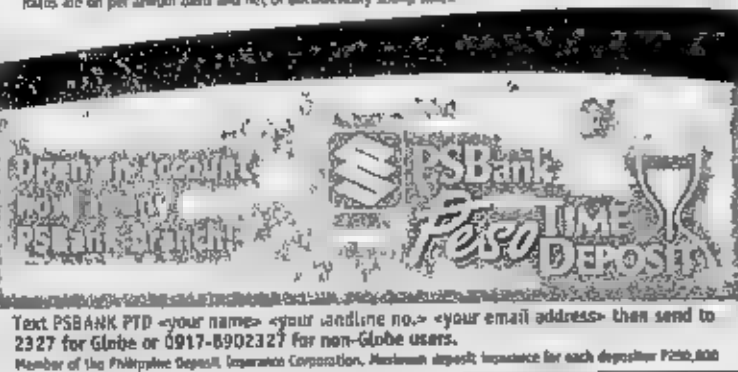
Though what critically defines the segment is clear, that of economical power with confident handling, certain X factors also must be present. It would not be out of place to say that styling and a motorsport background are great plus factors for these types of vehicles. All I know is that I'm thankful for the near permanence of the hot hatch segment, partially for the wonderful play on the themes of power and practicality. For the most part though, the gratification is personal.



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Canada firms eye RP investment

Mission looking at former US military bases as possible sites

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CANADIAN INVESTORS ARE ON THE LOOK-
out for possible sites for Filipino-Canadian
firms.

Armand Arreza, administrator of Subic Bay
Metropolitan Authority, said yesterday that a
business mission was in the country to look at
the suitability of former American military
bases as investment locations.

The mission included representatives from
25 organizations that belong to the Philippine
Chamber of Commerce of Toronto, Philip-
pine-Canada Business Council; and Manitoba
Business Council.

Led by Fil-Canadians, the six-day business
tour kicked off last Monday with a visit to the
Subic freeport.

The mission will also visit Camp John Hay
in Baguio City and Clark Field in Pampanga,

as well as tourist destinations like Bohol, Bo-
racay in Aklan and Cebu.

"The (visitors) broached the idea of invest-
ing in a retirement village for Canadians who
find the Philippines a very suitable place to
spend their twilight years," Arreza said.

He added that Subic was "conducive for re-
tirees due to its security, accessibility, natural
attractions, amenities, activities and a 24-
hour medical team to ensure that retirees
would certainly feel at home."

Arreza said Subic already host three retire-
ment enclaves that cater to the Japanese mar-
ket.

Relatedly, Arreza said the Philippine Retirement
Authority on Monday scouted for a loca-
tion in Subic suitable for yet another retire-
ment village for Japanese citizens.

PRA is a government agency mandated to
attract foreign nationals and former Filipino

citizens to spend their retirement years in the
country.

The agency's thrust is to help accelerate
economic development, contribute to the
foreign currency reserve, and provide the
most attractive package for foreigner-re-
tirees.

The Subic administrator said PRA Chair
Edgardo Aglipay planned to tap private firms
for the marketing and operation of the ven-
ture.

The PRA is considering large parcels of
land, like those in the Greyback area in Buni-
tican, the Kalayaan housing area and an area
beside the former George Dewey High
School.

An official familiar with the matter said
PRA and SBMA were expected to sign a mem-
orandum of agreement for a retirement pro-
ject within the month.

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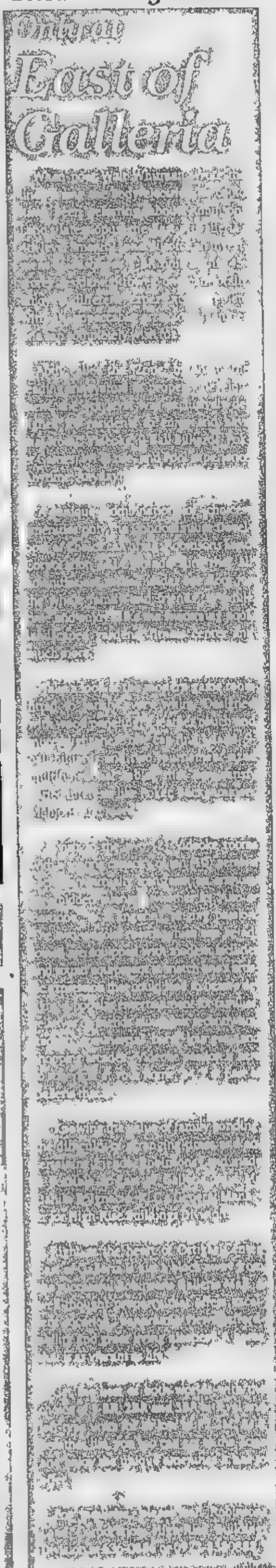
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WEDNESDAY,
FEBRUARY 15, 2006

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Prom-tastic



IT'S PROM TIME ONCE again! 2BU! wants to become a part of your special night. We have beauty tips and dress suggestions for girls. We even went to a fashion show to pick out numbers that would

add oomph to your prom moment. And if you join our special prom contest, you have a chance of winning a great prize: having Shu Uemura's Xeng Zulueta do your makeup on the night of

your prom! We don't want to leave the guys out, either. We have prom dos and don'ts to make sure your prom goes smoothly and your night is as memorable as possible. Enjoy!

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GLAM up in a black-and-white dress with matching gloves for a classy look.

Princess for a day

Text by Allison W. Lopez
Photos by Rudy Esperas

FOR A DRESS YOU'D probably wear only once or twice in your life, how much would you (or your parents) spend?

Not much, we guess, especially since you'd need matching shoes, bag, accessories, plus some prepping up for the big night. Whew.

SM Department Store, fortunately, offers more choices to budget-conscious teens in need of a quick but sensible fix.

Veering from its previous "safer" styles, SM's prom collection '06 is indeed promising—with more sorbet colors, exciting twists, even daring cuts.

At the recent fashion show at SM Makati to launch the new line, pretty young things from different schools romped in mostly tube or spaghetti-strapped, multilayered dresses. Flounce skirts also dominated the collection, while classic, black-and-white striped dresses with satin ribbons cinched at the waist stood out.

What must be the biggest surprise was a tiered dress with uneven hemline, cut dangerously above the thighs. The model seems to have worn one of the samples that were a tad smaller, but the actual merchandise's hemlines are said to have been lowered already. So girls, make sure the dress fits well especially since they only come in small, medium and large. There are no plus-sizes yet for this collection. Adjustments would also have to be done outside.

Cocktail dresses, other semi-formals and clubwear (like cute bubble skirts) are also available at the girl's teen wear section. Matching shoes, bags and accessories such as tiaras and headbands can also be found at the store's other sections.

Young gentlemen would have to content themselves with the usual suits and barongs the store has since these were not included in the prom collection.

At P999.75-P1,499.75, the young ladies' formals are a good steal especially when your prom is just three days away. There may also

PRINCESS/C2



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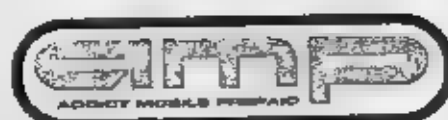
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Promo runs from February 10 to 28, 2006.

See posters and flyers for details

For ITT-NICE Form, also 0919, Series of 2006



CELEBRITY model Pia Romero looks every inch a princess in a light-pink frock and bejeweled headband.



SAY hello to a lemon-yellow gown that flatters fair young ladies.



DASHING Dominic Roco in a bright-on-dark ensemble



STRAPLESS two-tone formal



EMPIRE-CUT, shimmering number with ribbon accent



SIMPLE peach confection

SM Department Store and Avel Bacudio join forces to make every teenager's dream night come true

Princess for a day

From page C1

be a chance you'd run into somebody wearing the same thing, so make sure to add a dash of accessories to personalize your outfit.

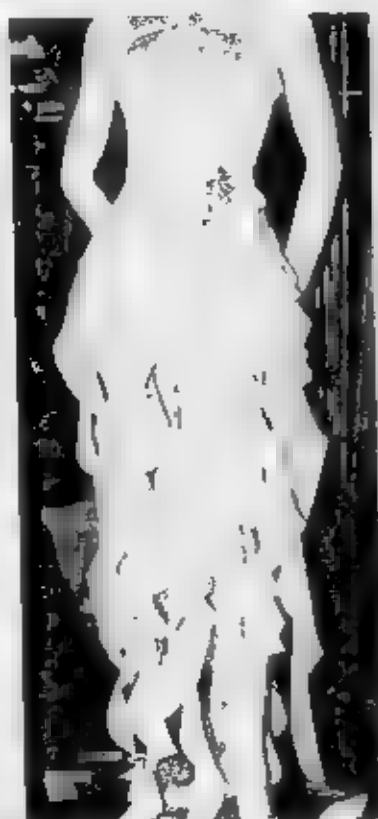
Semi-haute couture

If, however, your parents have a few thousands more to spare for their *unica hija*, Avel Bacudio's special prom line for SM is the perfect choice. The 29-year-old designer deftly produced lovely separates in dyed chiffon and duchess satin, albeit on short notice.

"You can even mix and match it," suggests Bacudio, so that instead of slipping into an all-pink or all-blue gown, you can choose the aqua tube top to go with the pink skirt instead.

Bacudio says he created classic embellished tops with skirts that have unconventional features like torn fringes. The designer also made it a point to incorporate a drawstring back so the wearer can adjust it to the right fit.

His prom collection will be displayed only at SM Makati, and has one small, two mediums, one large sizes in stock. If none of these princess-y frocks on the rack fit snugly, you can contact Bacudio (tel. 4350578) for a fitting or some alterations and just wait for three days to get the outfit.



BACUDIO pairs a classic tube top with an unconventional "torn" skirt for an updated prom look.



DRAWSTRING back makes it easy to get the right fit.



LITTLE black dress with dainty ribbon belt

AN EQUALLY stunning version of the black-and-white '50s-inspired dress



BUBBLE skirts are perfect for the after-party.



PRETTY-IN-PINK creation by young designer Avel Bacudio

The designer's dresses carried by SM will set you back around P15,000—definitely not cheap, but still, it's half of what he usually charges for a made-to-order prom dress. Bacudio also offers tailored barongs and suits for guys who want something more than the usual.

And before we forget, you'll also get a 20-percent discount on hair and makeup at David's Salon for every purchase at the Girl's Teen Wear in all SM branches.

Isn't that just great? Now you can get those sexy curly locks via digital perm at a steal, too.

These days, it does pay to be practical—especially when you have irresistible choices like these.



STRAPLESS rainbow chiffon dress with asymmetrical hem, P1,899.75; cowl-neck rainbow chiffon dress, P1,799.75



MONOCHROMATIC chiffon dress, P1,599.75; polo with cotton tapes, P925; monochromatic chiffon halter dress, P1,599.75

Knockout ensembles

THE INGREDIENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL prom are simple: chin-up confidence, a standout style, the perfect dress and a hottie for a date.

Twenty-Two BC shows that your prom doesn't have to be a minor "Stepford Wives" party, where you abandon your own style for a night just to blend in. In fact, it can really be fun dressing up for the ball if you stick to the look you're most comfortable in. Here are some ideas to help you out.

Pretty and romantic. Laces and ribbons in pastels, a sweet corsage, pretty makeup and a charming smile. Get romantic in a strapless dress that shows off your shoulders. Feel like Cinderella as you enter the scene.

Classic elegance. When there's no need to try so hard to catch attention since your mere presence is all the party needs, relax in a sophisticated dress that allows you to move around in a style that's truly yours.

City chic. For no-nonsense gals who wouldn't be caught wearing an off-season outfit, a halter top that spells sexy, bold and

confident is the best bet. Wear a short tea-length dress to show everyone that you are about to enjoy the night big time!

Pabulously eclectic. Hate to conform? Play the big night in a daring and unexpected piece. Try a tie-dyed dress that's edgy enough for disco dancing yet soft enough to make your date drool during the slow dance.

Minimalist glam. Simplicity and glam go together. A minimal yet stunning ball gown, a smashing hairstyle, and a poised walk are all you need as you face the crowd as prom queen.

Still, whatever style you choose, remember that enjoying the night is all that matters.

Twenty-Two BC also offers loads of privileges: free alteration services on all regular-priced items; a lifetime 10-percent discount card upon accumulation of P8,000 worth of purchase; a 20-percent birthday discount for those in the mailing list; store and event notification through mailers, e-mail, and text; and a 24-hour hotline for queries, sug-

gestions, and complaints (0916-6957273)

Visit Twenty-Two B.C. only at the SM Department Store Boutique Squares of the following SM Malls: SM City North Edsa, SM Makati, SM Cubao, SM Megamall, SM Manila, SM City Cebu, SM Bacoor, SM Fairview, SM Southmall, SM City Mandurriao, Harrison Plaza and SM Mall of Asia-Bay City. Visit www.22bc.com.ph.

To know more about Solo's latest collection, visit www.solo.com.ph, or visit the following branches: Glorietta 1, Alabang Town Center, Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Sta. Rosa, SM Centerpoint, SM Manila, SM Parapang, Alimall Cubao, Festival Super Mall and Abanao Square Baguio.

GOING BY TWENTYTWO BC

MENT'S OUTFITS BY SOLO

MODELED BY HARRY SOLER, STEPHANIEZUS AND HIRE JUNGKESLAGER OF CAL CARRIES

Stylish retail choices

WITH PROM SEASON fast approaching, it's time for teenagers to comb the metro in search of the perfect outfit for that one special night.

For teens (and parents) who don't want to blow a lot of time and money having a gown or suit made, buying retail is the more practical choice.

Debenhams, one of the U.K.'s largest retail stores, is holding an in-store promo for loyal fans until



THOMAS Nash formal shirts

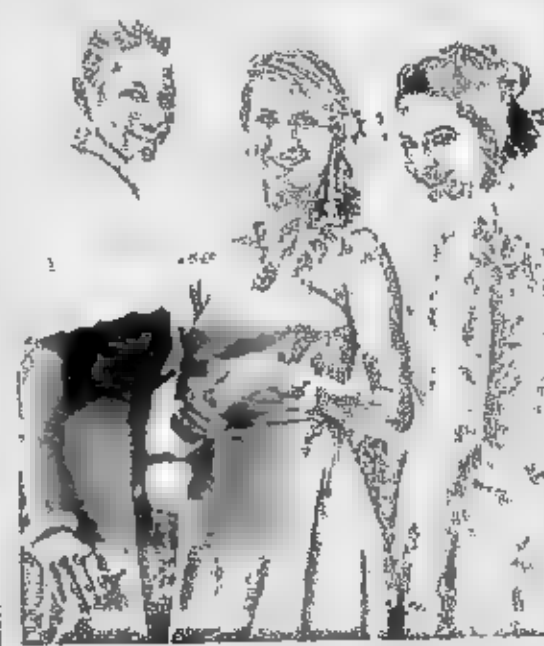
Feb. 25 For a minimum purchase, buyers are entitled to a gift certificate to make their prom night more special.

Looking for a perfect accessory to match your gown? A minimum purchase of P5,000 in Debut Womenswear will entitle you to a free P500 gift voucher—enough to buy a pretty necklace or two.

Guys aren't left out, either. Even a combined purchase of one tie and one Thomas Nash formal shirt gets a free P250 gift voucher.

Visit Debenhams at 3/L Shangri-La Plaza Mall (tel. 6329802, 6327156).

Bianca Consuejo



CLEAN and flattering style lines with just the right touch of detail and color, from Debenhams' Debut Womenswear

Hi-tech hair

By Pam Pastor

YOU KNOW YOU'RE LIVING IN A hi-tech world when even salons go digital.

If you're sick of spending tedious hours having your hair rebonded, if your straight hair has become blah and boring, if you want to breathe life into your limp locks, here are two words for you: digital perm.

Yes, digital perm, not your regular run-of-the-mill perm. What's the difference, you might wonder. "The curls are shinier. They're bigger. There's movement so it looks sexier. *Mas may* bounce and there's no frizz," said Cherry Reyes, who runs Essensuals Toni & Guy in 6750.

And, unlike the regular perm, your digital perm will last for only three months, which means you're not tied down to a lifetime of curliness—you can change your mind.

The secret lies in the process and in the tools used. "We use ceramic rods—they seal the moisture in the hair so the hair doesn't become frizzy," Cherry said.

Digital perm isn't the only thing that makes Essensuals Toni & Guy different from your regular salon. They offer a unique experience—from start to finish.

Clients are welcomed with a lovely massage, thanks to physical therapists who are part of the salon's staff. The salon also has private rooms—complete with your own cable TV—if you want to enjoy your treatments away from everyone else.

And if your treatment crosses into lunchtime, Glorietta and its whole myriad of restaurants are just a few steps away—you can always have food delivered or someone can pick up lunch for you.

The digital perm starts with a shampoo and a cut. Layers need to be added to your hair to show off the curls properly. It's important for the hair to be cut before the perm because cutting the hair after would make the curls pop.

Pre-perm solution is then added to your hair. Then another solution follows—one that softens the hair so your stylist can mold it into beautiful curls after.

Another thing which makes the digital perm different from the regular perm is that the solution is washed off before the actual perming starts.

Perm proper

The ceramic rods are then secured to your hair and covered with asbestos pads to protect your scalp from the heat. This is where the digital part comes in—each ceramic rod is hooked up to a heating machine.

The waiting time will depend on the texture of your hair. I have unbelievably thick hair so my time was a little longer than normal. After the rods are removed, the hair is washed and blown dry again and neutralizer is applied. Then, your beautiful curls will be revealed.

You can request for smaller or bigger curls. Hair products to keep your curls in tip-top shape will be recommended.

I've been using Bed Head's Small Talk and I love it equally for its effects and its delicious grape bubble gum smell.

I've also happily discovered that even during the few times I forgot to take my hair arsenal with me on out-of-town trips, my curls still look pretty even without products.

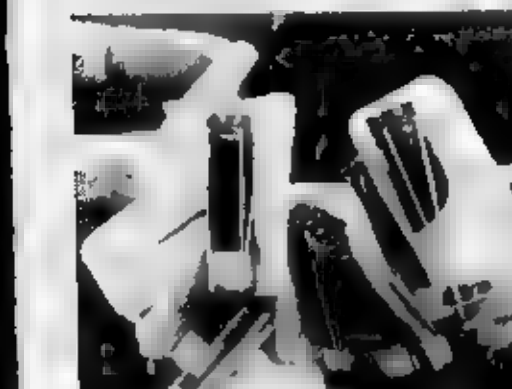
During the first few days after the perm, the curls would tighten only to become loose with the passing of days. And unlike some hair treatments with effects that fade over time—the digital perm looks better and better even as weeks pass.

After living with painstakingly rebonded hair for three years and not being able to go out of the house until every strand is dried perfectly in place, I realized with glee that digitally permed hair is wash and wear.

I can pop into the bathroom, pop back out, get ready in five minutes and run out of the house without worrying about having a massive mess on my head.

Biggest joy

Letting the air dry my hair is no longer a horrendous mistake. In fact, my biggest joy now is



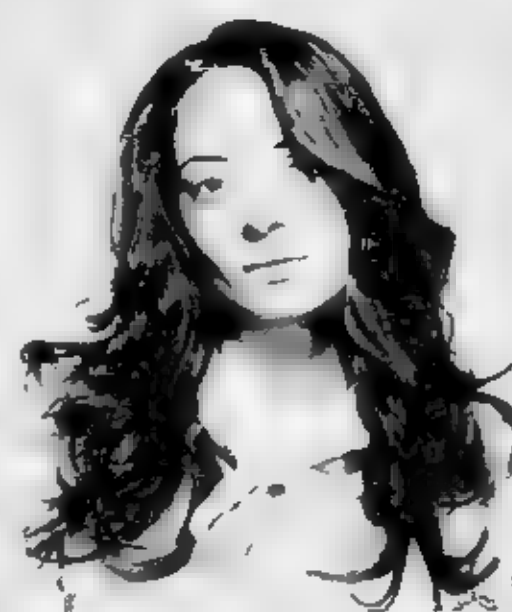
HAIR is secured with ceramic rods and the scalp is protected with asbestos pads.

PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS



STYLIST Christy works her magic

THREE different looks achieved by digital perm



going out of the house in the morning with my hair in a ponytail (hair experts will cringe at the thought of pulling wet hair into a ponytail but sometimes there isn't enough time in a day) and then removing the ponytail in the afternoon or evening to reveal beautiful, perfect, sexy curls.

With the time and energy I have been saving on not having to blow-dry my hair and after discovering the joy of low (even non-) maintenance hair, I might just stay curly forever.

There are others good reasons to go back to Essensuals Toni & Guy—their stylists are trained in London (where Toni & Guy is based) before they are allowed to cut and every time they introduce a new form of treatment they are intensively trained. For the digital perm, they were trained for a week in Singapore.

Toni & Guy is also the salon to go to for crazy colors and creative looks. But above the training and skills is their obvious and genuine concern for people's hair.

No wonder a number of celebrities have made Toni & Guy their salon of choice. Christy spent extra time patiently removing a knot from the back of my head—a common problem for people with extra-thick hair.

Take a break from shampoo commercial-straight hair. This year, curly is the way to go



And when a client came in, asking for a digital perm because she was unsatisfied with the perm she had at another salon just days ago, Cherry and Christy talked seriously about her case—as physicians would—before asking the woman to come back in a few weeks.

"It wouldn't be good for her hair," they said. "Besides, she wouldn't be able to fully appreciate the effects of the digital perm."

People like to think of them as stylists, I like to think of them as hair doctors.

Essensuals Toni & Guy is at G/E 6750 Ayala Ave., Makati City. Operating hours are from 9 a.m.-8 p.m., on Mondays-Saturdays; and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Sundays. Call 8128559 or 8128002.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

THE HAIR doctors are in. Essensuals Toni & Guy in 6750

PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS



THE AUTHOR with Cherry Reyes, Toni & Guy creative and managing director

Have prom-pretty hair

IF YOU WISH TO HAVE YOUR hair digitally permed for your prom, do it a few days before your special night so you can have time to adjust to your new look.

Choose a look that is both comfortable and easy to fix. Think about it: if your complex dance move shakes your hair out of place, will you be able to salvage the look in the bathroom?

Up or down? If you can't choose between a sweeping up-do or having your locks framing your face, bring a photo of your dress (or bring the dress itself) and ask your stylist to help you decide.

Schedule a salon date with friends—getting ready for the prom is half the fun and the fun would be tripled when shared with your closest girlfriends.

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Whitening is not all-in-one. It is a continuous and integrated process that needs ample time to make you fully reap its benefits. That's why serious whitening requires nothing less than a comprehensive skin care system.

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Get a Whitening starter kit for only P2799!

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Achieving porcelain-white, celebrity complexion and making it last is a process that goes beyond the usual skin-deep solutions. Thanks to the discovery of Glutathione, getting more permanent results has finally become so effortless.

Glutathione is essentially a natural, immunity-boosting tripeptide amino acid that is found in the body. Regular intake of Glutathione has been tested and proven for its positive "effect" whitening of dark skin. No wonder, it has been dubbed as the "prescription-of-the-moment" by Hollywood dermatologists, thus earning its stature as one of the most coveted, "to-die-for" beauty secrets among celebrities, socialites—and practically anyone who can afford it.

However, with the cutting-edge expertise of Hortaleza, M.D., the once-prohibitively priced Glutathione is now made accessible with new Hortaleza, M.D. Illuminous Whitening Capsule! Enjoy the multi-benefits of Glutathione whitening, and anti-aging, plus Vitamins C and E with Alpha Lipic Acid. All in one capsule for only P3975 each! That's 53% more affordable than other brands! Get it in packs of 30's and 10's at all HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives Stores nationwide. Now isn't that illuminating news for your skin?



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Do you know that 40 is the new 30? Now, more than ever, skin has never been so sexy beyond 40! Youthful skin is here to stay. In an age where every second counts, count on Hortaleza, M.D. Age Reducer System to give ageing skin a second chance. It rejuvenates skin while erasing tell-tale lines completely!

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LIFESTYLE

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inquirer life name/age/city/message to
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)



Prom dos and don'ts

By Cheryl Tiu
2bU! Correspondent

IT'S THE TIME OF THE YEAR THAT EVERY one in high school has been waiting for: prom season. Whether it's sophomore night, junior prom or senior ball, everyone's excited to dress up and waltz and look like princes and princesses for the night.

To make the night as worry-free as possible, 2bU! has come up with a list of things that should—and shouldn't—be done at your formal to make sure the most highly anticipated event of the school year turns out to be the most memorable as well.

Do

- Prepare a camera to capture the photogenic memories. Even if there is a professional photographer, it's a lot more fun to candidly capture the night. Just make sure you don't lose your camera, especially when you're out on the dance floor.
- Tell your parents where you are going and who you are going with. This way, you'll be able to have fun and not get in trouble with them afterward.
- Make sure that appointments for hair, nails, makeup, etc. are taken care of a week, or at least several days, before prom.
- Start breaking in and practice walking on prom shoes at least a week before prom so when the big night arrives, there won't be any sore feet—and a lot of tripping.
- Ask for the color of your date's dress and tux so you don't clash on the big night.
- Have spare cash just in case something pops up that might require extra money.
- Make sure everything fits in advance.

Do not wait until the day before

Don't break up with your boyfriend before the prom. Do it afterward

- Engage in good conversations with your date. If you really don't have anything to talk about, try involving the other couples at your table into a group conversation, instead of sulking at your plate.
- Have a good time, make wise choices, and enjoy yourself.

Don't

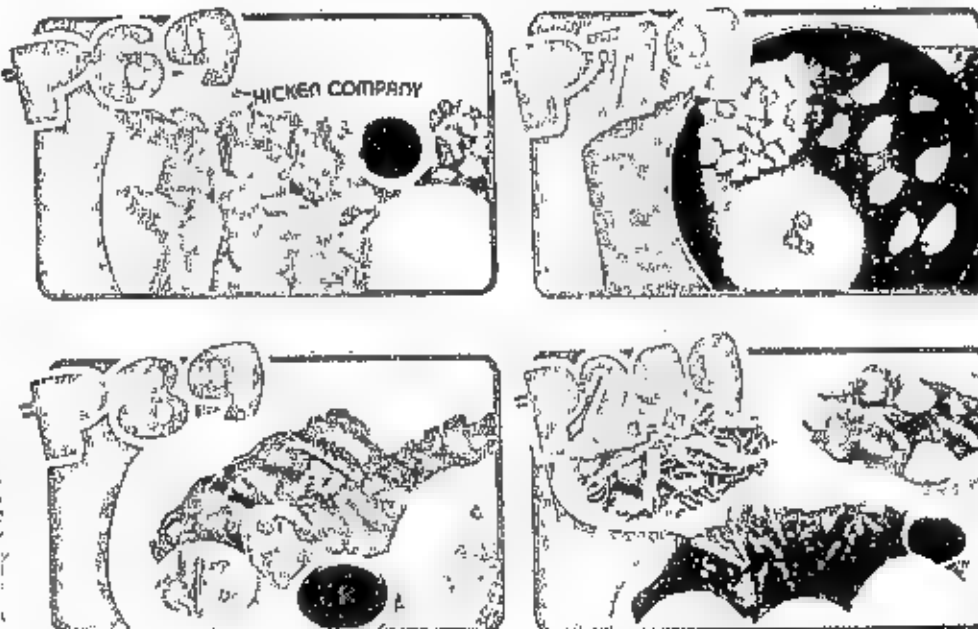
- Forget to pick up your date.
- Forget the corsage or boutonniere.
- Ask to see your date's dress or tux before the big day—it's supposedly bad luck.
- Overdo the perfume or cologne. Please don't bathe in it.
- Tell your date that she looks better without makeup and hairspray. This is not the right time to tell her that you prefer the "natural" look.
- Sit at home and sulk, even if you don't have a date. Go stag or with a group of friends and have a blast.
- Break up with your boyfriend/girlfriend during the week of prom. If you think the breakup is coming, just bite your tongue and try to wait a few days after prom. Prom is a memory that lasts a lifetime, and you don't want it to be clouded by a bad breakup.

E-mail the author at chloe_dominique@yahoo.com



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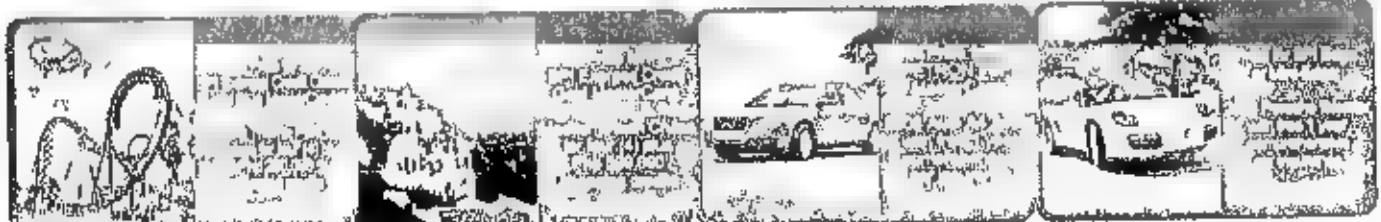
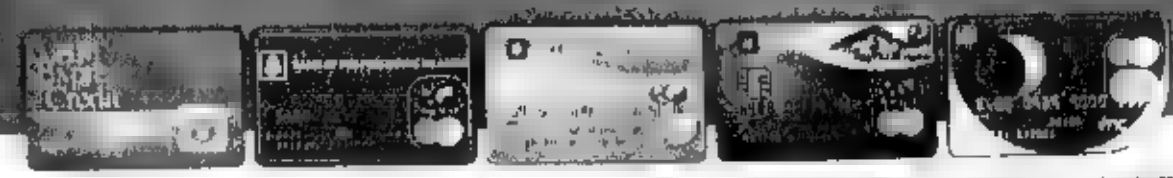
See mechanics poster for details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 7081 Series of 2005



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Make it
Happen



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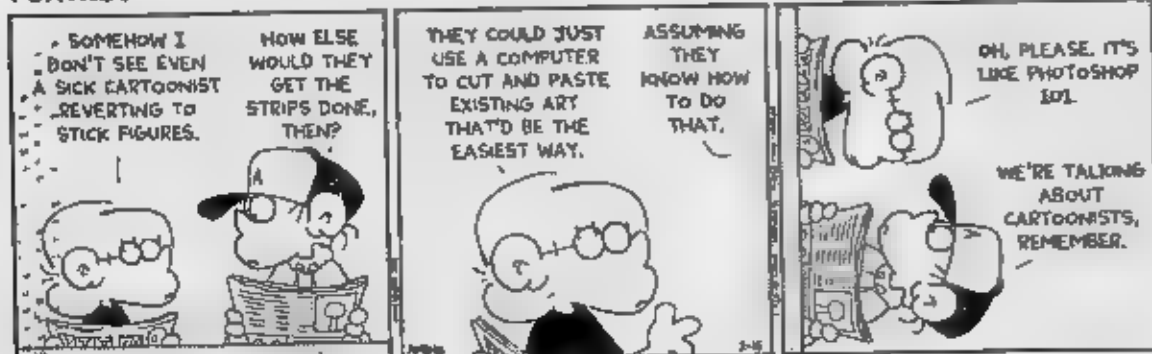
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BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Your curiosity takes you to strange places. You have a fine mind, and often put an entirely original twist on things. You like to experiment to discover new ways of doing things. You enjoy nature, and you love a good joke. Increased solitude in the year ahead will help you learn something new. You'll welcome this.

Birthday of: Matt Groening, producer/writer; Jane Seymour, actress; Galileo Galilei, scientist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might be surprised by the raw truth that you learn from a friend or a member of a group today. Nevertheless, the truth is a ways better than a lie, isn't it?

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your naturally curious nature helps you see a new philosophy or way of thinking about something today. Keep an open mind. Fresh truths are revealed to you now.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your willingness to be truthful with someone close to you can take a relationship to a new level. A deeper honesty simply promotes a deeper appreciation and stronger sense of trust.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): It pleases you to see new ways of using old resources. Perhaps you will discover new applications for things you thought were useless or obsolete.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is an excellent day to do research or delve deeply for answers you seek. You could learn a new way of doing something that might be handy for you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Be open to entirely new methods of doing things at work today. This might involve letting go or getting rid of previous standards or equipment.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Don't be critical of children today. Remember that you were once a child yourself. Try to understand what others need.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a good day to get rid of whatever you don't need at home. Tackle garbage areas, bathroom areas and laundry. Your aim is to make big improvements at home—and you can succeed!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might buy something new today or hear advice from someone that alters your appearance for the better. Don't be afraid to follow a hot tip.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You want to use your money in a useful, productive way today. You want to buy something that is going to improve your life. You might also see new ways of earning money.

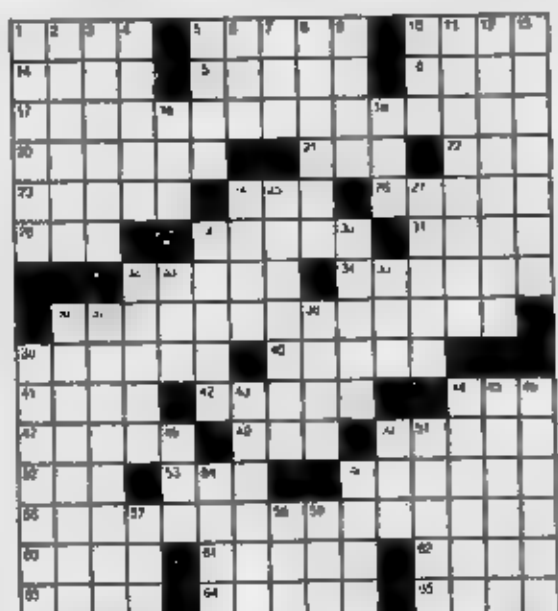
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're on a new self-improvement kick. You want to look better and relate better to everyone you know. You want to be a better person!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your ability to discover secrets is amazing now. Use this ability to research things at work. You might also use this ability to discover skeletons in the closet. (Oops.)

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Labels
- 5 Glacial ice mass
- 10 Khayyam of Persia
- 14 Woody's son
- 15 Muse of poetry
- 16 On the (declining)
- 17 Angels' place
- 20 Yeast
- 21 Louis or Carrie
- 22 Gilder Trevino
- 23 Fragrant compound
- 24 Lode's yield
- 25 French psychoanalyst Jacques
- 28 Souse's syndrome
- 29 Formulated belief
- 31 Alvan, e.g.
- 32 Post-workout vices
- 34 Moralizing tales
- 36 Angels' place
- 39 Catches
- 40 Salacious
- 41 Cross letters
- 42 Spud
- 44 One NCO
- 47 Courtier
- 49 Old draft org.
- 50 Earth tone
- 52 Poetic pasture
- 53 "... a bird..."
- 55 Lady at a tea
- 56 Angels' place
- 60 Mica concept?
- 61 Follow as a consequence
- 62 Kind of poker
- 63 Prouberance
- 64 Cultural values
- 65 Playwright Hart



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

2/15/06

Tuesday's Puzzle Solver



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- 1 Set aside for later
- 2 Type of warrant
- 3 Acts the bed-winner
- 4 Italian table wine
- 6 In stitches?
- 8 Notable period

- 7 Bit of hope
- 8 Exposed
- 9 Facsimile
- 10 Part of BYOB
- 11 Daily high point during basic training
- 12 Hardened by heat
- 13 Acting monerches
- 18 Aachen article
- 19 Sushi staple
- 24 Hydrox carbonate
- 25 Consequences
- 27 Monastery superiors
- 29 Storage box
- 30 Bid
- 32 Open courtyards
- 33 Fidel's comrade
- 35 Broadcast
- 36 Insurance
- 37 Gave an account of
- 38 Caddy's pocketful
- 39 Steak choice
- 43 Concurrence
- 44 Packing label phrase
- 45 Galad intellect
- 46 Tendencies
- 48 Fairway position
- 50 Klutz
- 61 Abyss
- 64 Biblical pronoun
- 65 Calamities
- 57 "... Haw"
- 58 Axe-handle wood
- 59 Batman and Robin, e.g.

BY JESS ABRERA



PUGAD BABOY

BY PM. JUNIOR



MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOM.KE TEJIDO



BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA



LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



SHU UEMURA SWEET MODE

Simply sweet

On Princess, Xeng aimed for simple, fresh-faced look. After prepping her skin with light foundation and powder, she lined Princess' eyes with the blue end of the eye light pencil and intensified the color with the P600 Blue wing pressed eye shadow. After that, Xeng applied the Sakura glow-on, a fresh pink shade on the apples of her cheeks. She then finished it off with a swipe of the Daisy sweet lip gloss.

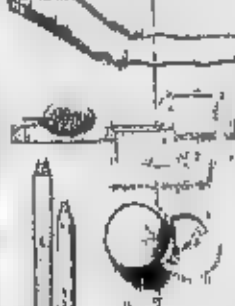


Sweet and sexy

For a natural but striking look, Xeng evened out Danie's skin with Water Perfect foundation. After patting on the Eye Jelly in Gold, Xeng lined Danie's eyes with pressed eye shadows in P200 (Orange Sorbet) and ME100 (Strawberry Mousse). After a sweep of the Apricot glow-on on Danie's cheeks, Xeng applied more Eye Jelly on the center of Danie's lips and topped it with Daisy sweet lip gloss for a fuller pout.



MAKEUP BY XENG ZULJETA
HAIR BY TATIN YANG



CHECK out Sweet Mode at Shu Uemura counters in Rustan's Glorietta and Shangri-La.

Sugary sweet

For a more avant-garde look, Xeng used a host of colors from the Sweet Mode collection. After prepping her skin with Water Perfect foundation, Xeng brushed on the Sugar glow-on to make Joy's skin glow. She then patted Joy's eyes with Eye Jelly in order to make color adhere better to the eyelids, and used a combination of four eye shadows (ME100 Strawberry Mousse, P200 Orange Sorbet, P300 Lemon Curd, and P600 Blue wing), taking care to blend the color carefully for a watercolor-inspired effect. She finished off with a sweep of Apricot blush, eye jelly and sweet lip gloss in Plumeria.



Prom-perfect makeup

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Niko Cid

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, FIVE years ago. A young buck from the nearby all boys' school stood nervously at the foot of the stairs, waiting for me to finish my graceful flight in my glittering blue gown. He looked up with tender eyes and said, "You look better without makeup."

No, the rest of the night didn't go too well, either. But while it wasn't exactly the most tactful thing in the world to say, he was right. The matte brown eye shadow, earth-toned blush and red lipstick made me look like someone else (say, somebody's spinster aunt).

While five years may not seem like such a long time, makeup styles have greatly improved since then.

For instance, it is now possible to wear bright colors such as blue, pink, orange, and green without looking like a clown. Glitter doesn't have to be gritty or loud, and not everyone has to wear red lipstick for nights out. Also, many high school teens now are more receptive to themes such as "masquerade," so it's easier to create a look for a particular theme.

2bU! chose three of the country's top makeup brands to help high school girls get ready for their prom. Check out the latest offerings from Shu Uemura, MAC and Lancôme.

These days, there's no reason to look like someone's spinster aunt. And it'll save you the trouble of blackening your date's eye if he insists on saying that your makeup's ugly.

E-mail biancaconsunji@yaho.com

LANCÔME ENCHANTRESS

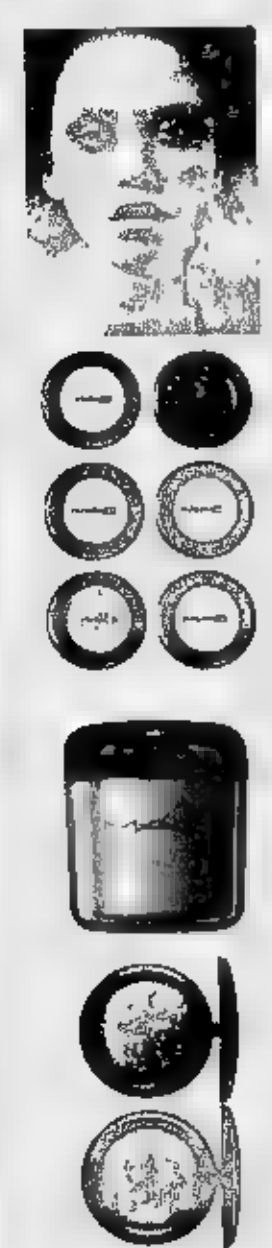
Inspired by Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Lancôme's Enchantress collection is perfect for girls who want a fairy-tale prom.

The look is all about shimmer, ethereal colors, and sweet-looking shine, so play out your princess fantasies because this makeup is meant to be worn with a tiara.

The Petite Bohème shimmer powder, for instance, creates a subtle glow to highlight specific areas on the face and shoulder. Think Galadriel from "Lord of the Rings." It's available in 3 shades: silver, gold and bronze.

Juicy Tubes, Lancôme's best-selling product, are perfect for glossy lips without that overly sticky feeling (the yummy flavors don't hurt, of course.) The limited-edition colors for this season include peach (for the nude look) and a pinky-plum shade.

The Color Focus Palette includes four jewel-toned eye shadows in purples, pinks, and shimmering whites in a floral palette pretty enough to whip out during the prom. These colors are versatile enough to go smoky or clean, and last long, too. Finish off the look with Crayon Kohl Waterproof liner, a long-lasting liner available in four metallic colors: silver, gold, bronze and blue.



MAC LINGERIE

If you exude natural but glamorous vibes, MAC Lingerie is the collection for you. With makeup colors that look and feel like second skin, Lingerie is great for prom-ready girls who want to be able to use the makeup they wear after a night of glitter and frothy gowns.

The collection contains new colors of MAC's best-selling products. You won't go wrong with their eye shadows, which last long and in colors that stay put the whole night (no disappearing act when you thank the Academy for your prom queen crown). Try the eye shadows in Silp Pink (pink with pearl) and Taupeless (lavender with diamond cluster).

Also try their Pro Pigments, which are all-around powders for the eyes, lips, cheeks, and décolletage. Goldenaire, a rosy pink shade with gold pearl, is the best all-around color. The pigment also comes in Lovely Lily (lavender with red pearl) and Pink Opal (ivory tinted with pink).

The show-stopper, however, is the Mineralize SkinFinish. This dome-shaped blush is not only pretty to look at, it gives one of the best natural flushes from powder blush. Petticoat, a pale rose shade with gold and amber shimmer, looks great on any skin tone. Naked You, a pale beige shade with brown streaks, is a good highlighter.

Of course, a MAC collection will never be complete without their trademark lipstick and lip gloss. Check out Pink Maribu, which goes well with knockout black gowns, and Of Course! a frosted coral shade.

The Lingerie collection is available at MAC counters in Rustan's Glorietta and Shangri-La.



Do you love the Sweet Mode look? Go to your prom sporting the prettiest makeup this side of town courtesy of Shu Uemura. 2bU! is choosing one girl (and a couple of her friends) to be made over by Xeng Zuljeta for the prom. All you have to do is e-mail your name, school, contact details, a clear photo, and a short essay on why you deserve the makeover to 2bu.beauty@gmail.com. Be as creative as you can!

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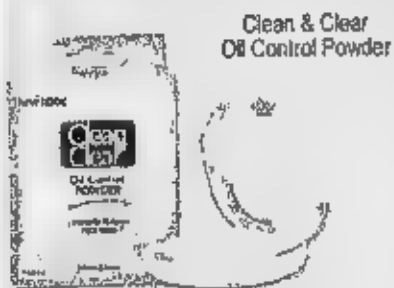
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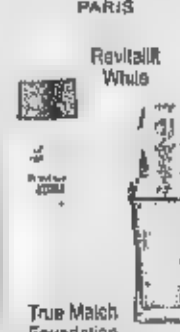
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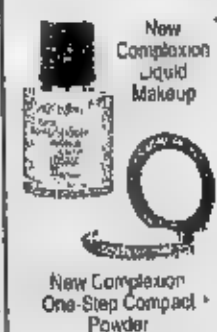
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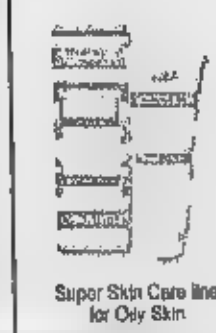
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Cool, boy

By Paolo Lorenzana
26U! Contributor

PROM IS LIKE THE HOLY COMMUNION OF

dating—a rite of passage that, with all its expectations and reservations, is an experience in itself. But before you slip into your suit and strap

Your prom isn't the last night you'll ever be in the presence of the opposite sex, so take it easy, tiger



that Velcro corsage onto your date's wrist, here are some things to consider so you can avoid cringing at the memory of one of the most significant nights of your high school life.

Do's

Your interest in your date's parents should correlate with your interest in taking her out of their house. Arriving early enough to pick your date up and assuring them of who you are and your night's itinerary is like collateral for bringing their daughter back. Anticipate and deliver. From matching the

color of her dress to her corsage, taking care of the post-prom snack tab to the music that plays in your car and opening its doors for her—always be one step ahead as your date's attendant and bodyguard.

If you had to pick one night in your high school life to actually look like money, make it prom night. Comb that hair, shave that budding mustache, and invest in a suit that isn't shiny, too big or a mint-green hand-me-down from an older brother.

All right, you can never be Diego Luna in "Dirty Dancing 2," but at least try to put some effort in your two-step. After making it clear that you "don't dance," moving your feet—and not just shaking your head—will still be appreciated by your date.

If your prom turns out to have the fun factor of a school symposium, bringing your date out for some coffee or midnight grub rather than a raucous after-party is always favorable. Showing her a great time with good conversation is your golden ticket to a succeeding date.

Don'ts

Girls devote almost an entire day to what you see when they finally emerge from their rooms. And that doesn't even include the dress. A compliment or two won't make you a cheesy cliché, but ignoring your date's appearance will make you an ungrateful pig.

Considering you'll actually want to remember this night and bring your date home safely, lay off the booze. It's one party that can afford to be "lame" without the liquor. There'll be enough beer kegs in college, anyway.

Your prom isn't the last night you'll ever be in the presence of the opposite sex, so take it easy, tiger. Groping your date on the dance floor and telling her you've got motel reservations won't crown you prom king. It'll only label you a perv.

Do away with flashcard conversation or telling your date how many crunches you do at the gym. You can impress her by listening and being genuinely interested in what she has to say, not by how many topics you can talk about or by treating her like a counsellor.

You will never be Heath, Freddy, or that dude with the hot date. Acting like someone you're not will only put snags in your night and make your date uncomfortable. Your prom happens only once, so whether you're going with a girlfriend or a pity partner tagged by your mother, milk this night for what it's worth.

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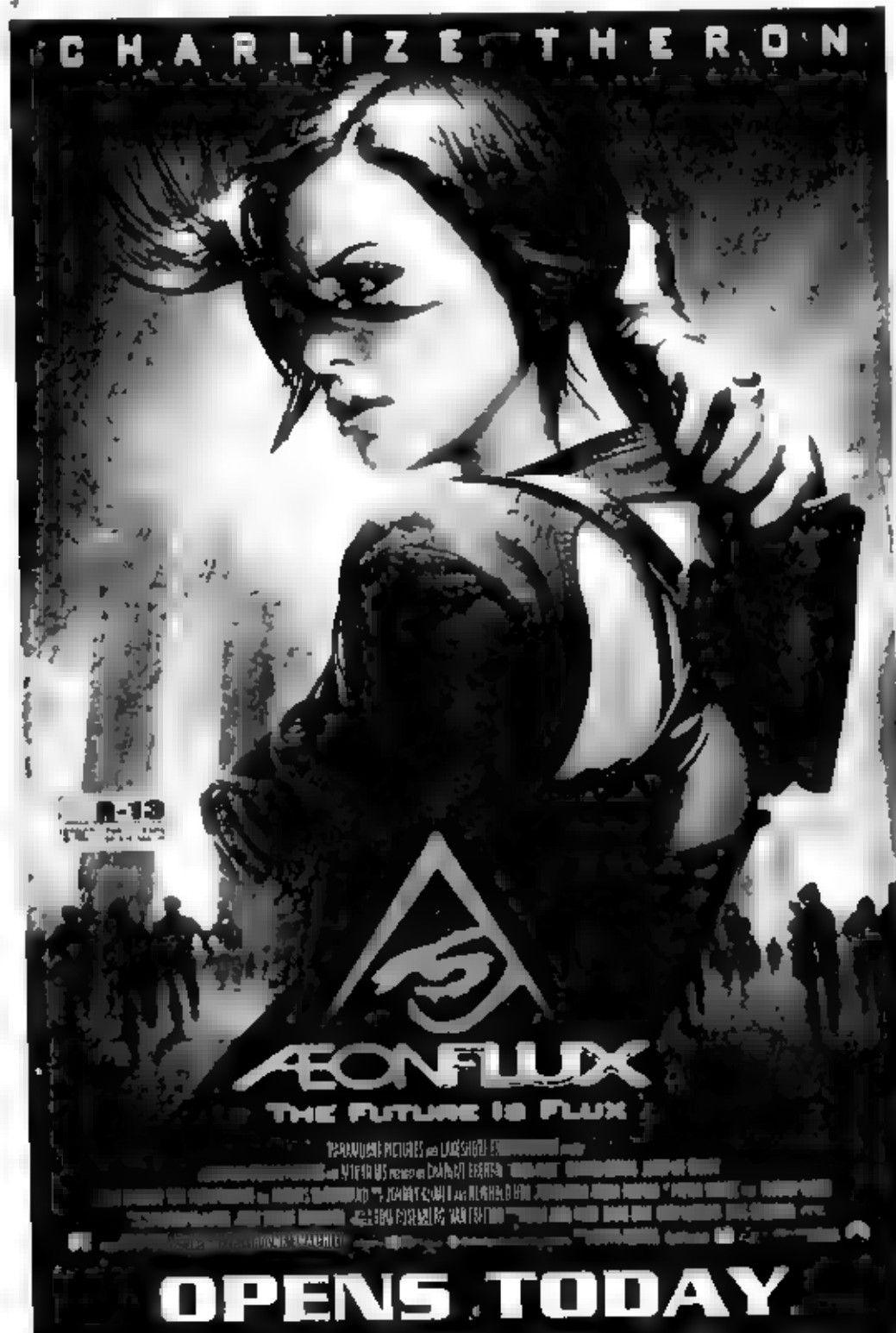
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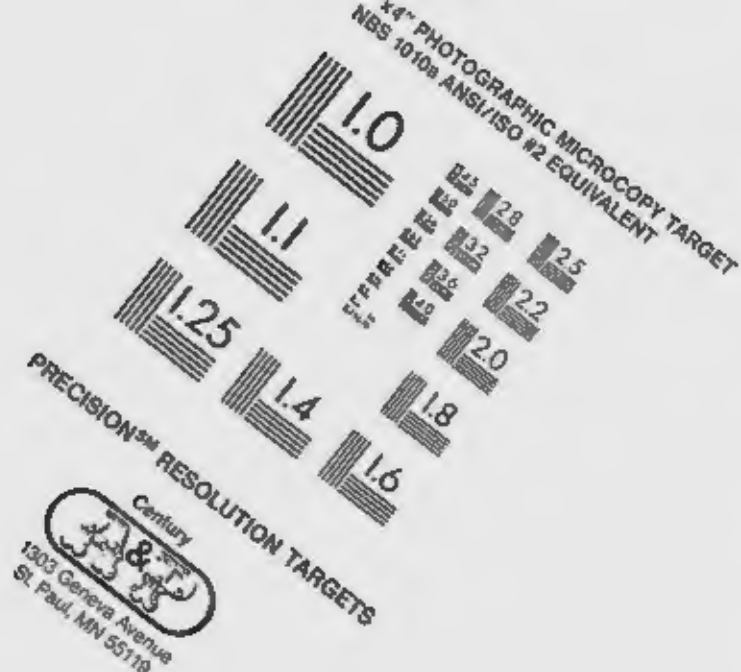
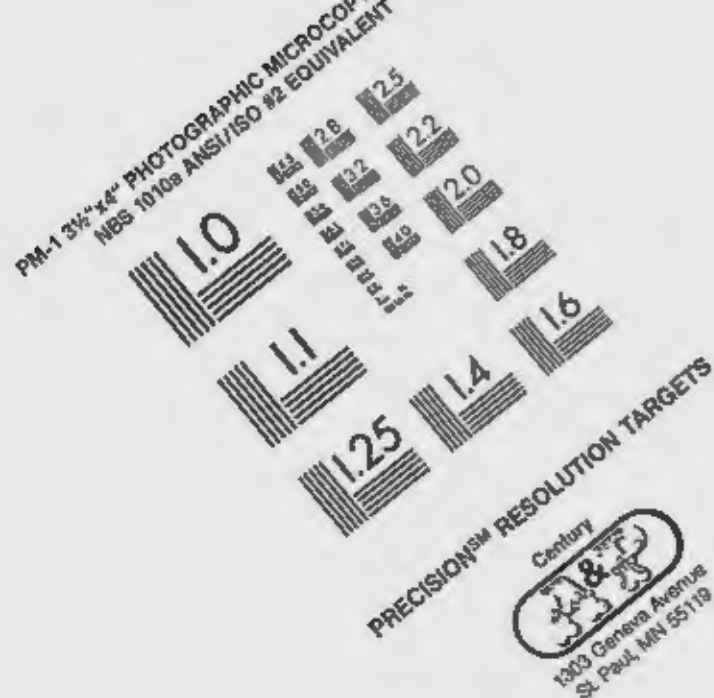
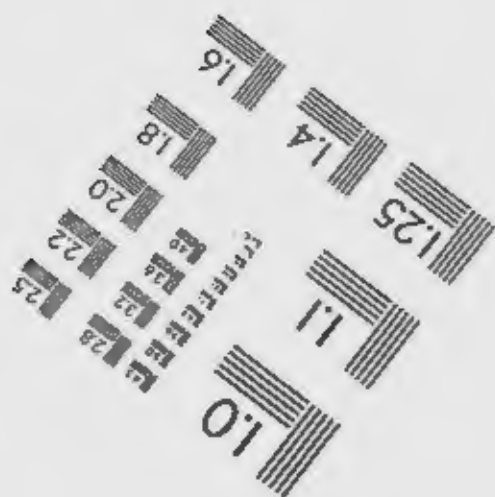
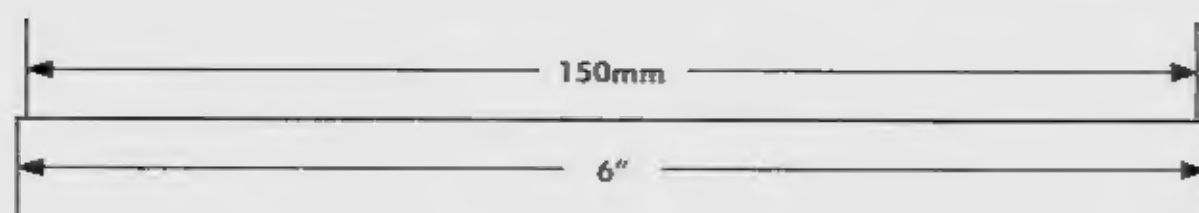
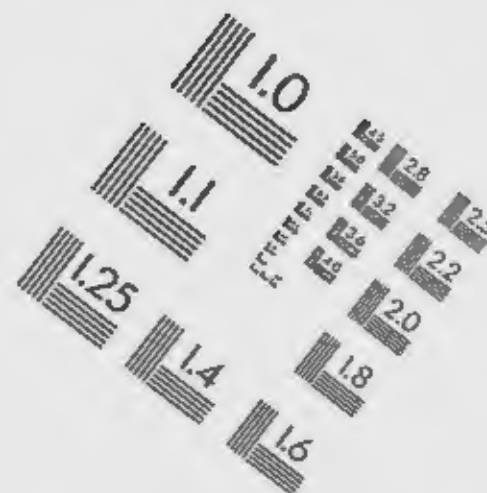
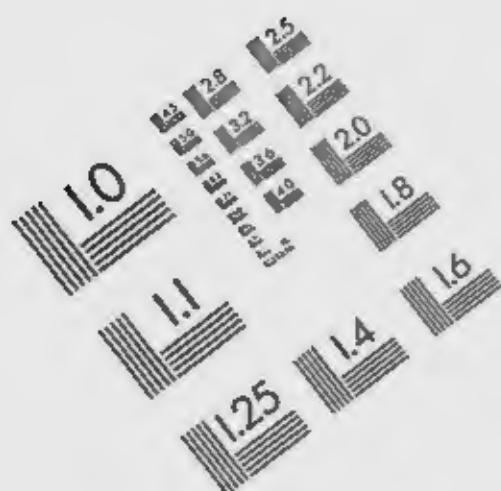
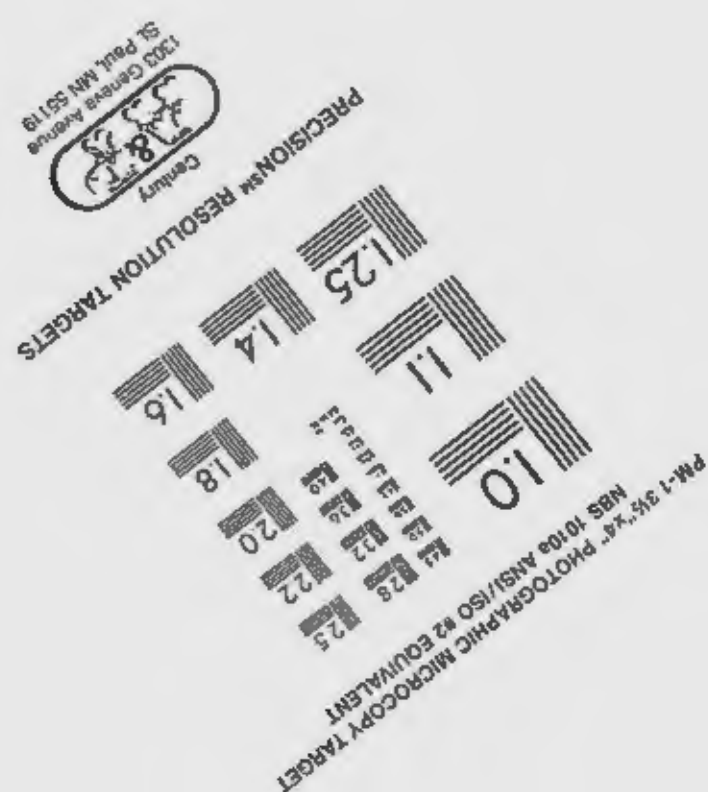
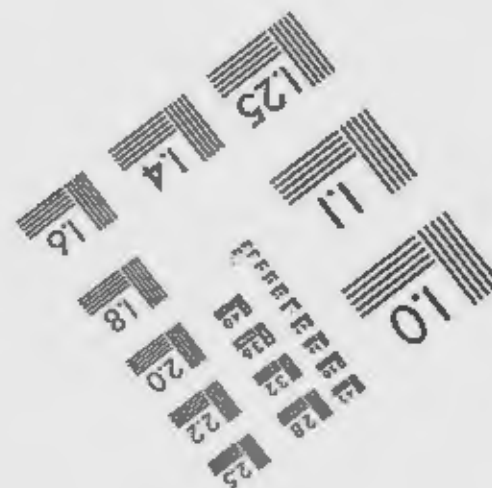
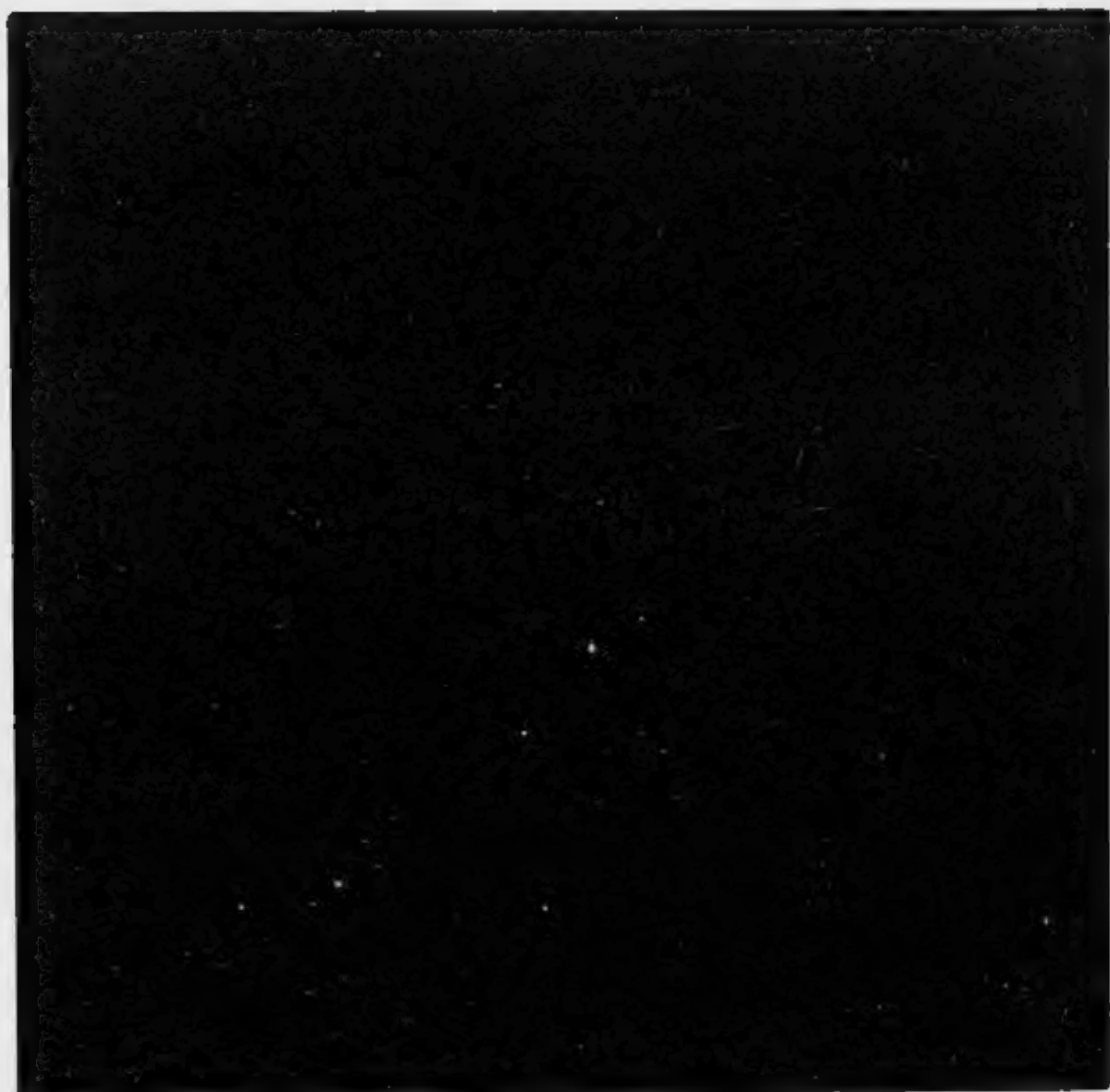
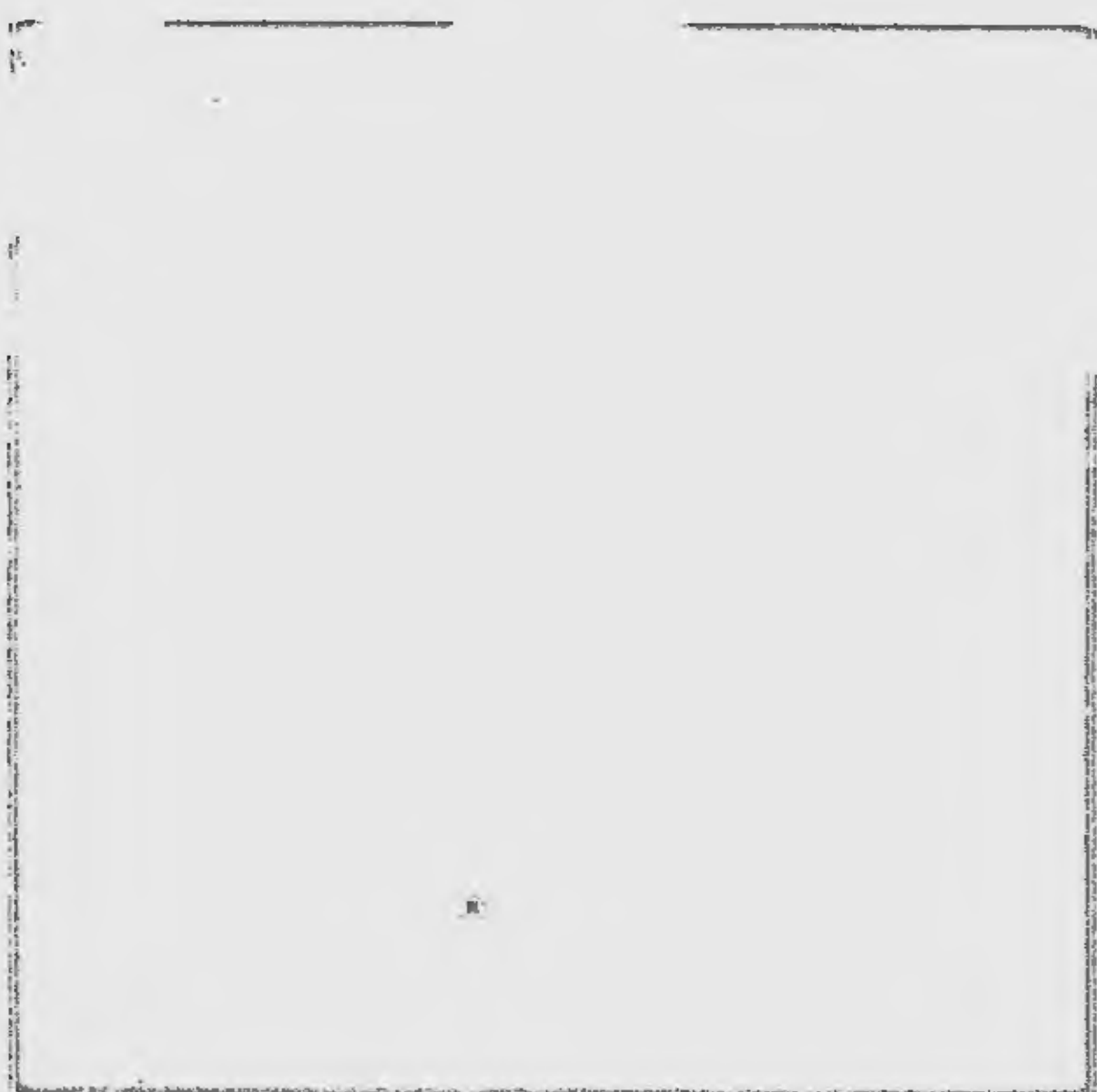


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